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CONTENTS

SPECIAL ATTRACTION

- 1 3** **Wings of Doom:**
There is no hiding place from a dragon's flame.
- 1 4** **Dragons Are Wizards' Best Friends** — David E. Cates
Four new familiars with exotic tastes in masters.
- 2 2** **The Dragon's Bestiary** — The Readers
Not all new types of dragons are bad—only most of them!
- 3 0** **The New Ecology of the Dragons** — Jean Rabe and Skip Williams
Teeth and scales and tavern tales, of such are dragons made.

OTHER FEATURES

- 4 0** **The Hatchling Magazine** — A. D. Young
From humble beginnings do great things grow.
- 4 8** **The Ever-After** — fiction *by* eluki bes shahar
Which is the greater: the hero's will or the hero's destiny?
- 6 0** **The Marvel®-Phile** — Skip Williams
Suppose sweet old Aunt May decided to bump off Galactus. . . .
- 6 4** **Dangerous Terrain** — Dan Salas
Fixing an old robot might be a serious mistake in the GAMMA WORLD® game.
- 6 8** **The Role of Computers** — Hartley, Patricia, and Kirk Lesser
Computer-game opponents are especially bad when they can out-think you.
- 8 0** **Arrows of the East** — David Kloba
What sort of arrow works well against an angry kappa?
- 8 4** **If You Wish Upon a Star . . .** — Kevin Murphy
Be careful of what you wish for. You might get it!

DEPARTMENTS

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| 5 Letters | 58 TSR Previews | 100 Dragonmirth |
| 6 Forum | 82 Gamers Guide | |
| 10 Sage Advice | 94 Convention Calendar | |

COVER

Keith Parkinson didn't skimp on the action in his untitled cover painting for this issue (the editor calls it "Ouch!"). Keith says he figured that fighting dragons would hold nothing back, and "having your head breathed on" sounded like a pretty bad turn of events. Well, it is better to give than to receive. . . .

LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

Fantastic highs

Dear Dragon:

I liked your article in issue #143, "The Highs and Lows of Fantasy" (pages 37-44). But upon reading the concluding lists of books and modules, I was very disappointed to not see the DRAGONLANCE® series appear. I have read three of the books (the Legends series), and I feel they would qualify for the high-fantasy list. I was also surprised because several hardcover books and modules have been written specifically dealing with the DRAGONLANCE saga.

Eric Middlecamp
South St. Paul MN

There are so many good fantasy novels out that it would be impossible to list them all, much less categorize them. But we appreciate your mention of the DRAGONLANCE saga.

Artists need mail

Dear Dragon:

I just wanted to tell you (and I'm sure many people share my feelings) that the artwork on the covers of your magazine is sensational. I was wondering if TSR or another company is producing posters from the covers of DRAGON Magazine, and if so, where can I reach these people.

Chris Kasparian
Staten Island NY

Thank you very much. If there is a particular artist or piece of artwork that you are especially interested in, you can write to the artist, c/o DRAGON Magazine P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A.), and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your letter: Write only the artist's name and your return address on the SASE, and we'll fill in the artist's address (we prefer not to give out the full addresses of our contributors). Some artists have color prints available of their work.

You might also wish to see The Art of DRAGON Magazine, a 128-page, full-color collection of artwork from past issues of the magazine. This book is available from most hobby and game shops for \$16.95 (£9.95 in the U.K.). You can also get this book from the TSR Mail Order Hobby Shop (P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147); write for a free catalog.

Claydonia

Dear Dragon:

After reading "Claydonia Conquers the World" (issue #144), I had to write. First, power # 12, Use Self As Missile, should be called Ultimate Missile, which was created by Tom Sawyer (see issue #128, page 56). Second, what about a power called Eject Limbs? This allows a Claydonian to shoot off limbs as missiles. (Warning: This reduces hit points and number of attacks.) Third, how about having "Lords & Legends" with Claydonians for one or two issues?

Dennis Payne
Holliston MA

We missed the Ultimate Missile reference; thank you for catching it. Clay-O-Rama referees should have no trouble working out details for your Eject Limbs power, though having a supply of regular missiles would probably be better in the long run. As for having a Claydonian "Lords & Legends" column—it isn't likely, but the Claydonians probably appreciated the thought.

Column questions

Dear Dragon:

I have three questions:

1. Can technological items be submitted for "Bazaar of the Bizarre"? It would be great to see new equipment for TOP SECRET/S.I.™, MARVEL SUPER HEROES®, STAR FRONTIERS®, and other high-tech games.

2. Can "The Ecology of" articles be written on monsters that have appeared in "The Dragon's Bestiary"?

3. How about a new feature, similar to "The Ecology of" articles, featuring the psychologies of creatures rather than their physiologies? It could focus on the cultures, beliefs, myths, and religions of relatively intelligent creatures. Such a column would be a great place to learn more about the various humanoids, as well as the much-neglected creatures of faerie.

Joshua M. Jeffryes
Slater IA

Technological items certainly have a chance of appearing in the "Bazaar of the Bizarre" column, though it would be the first time that happened. We'd prefer "The Ecology of" articles be confined to "official" monsters given in the game books (for the AD&D? D&D? GAMMA WORLD®, and related games). Finally, many "The Ecology of" articles have given details on the lives and cultures of fantasy creatures, such as "The Ecology of the Mind Flayer" (issue #78). We once ran an article called "The Psychology of the Doppelganger" (issue #80), which went into some of the areas you mentioned. We do have a special section planned on creatures from faerie realms, probably set for next year, that you might find of interest.

R.I.P.: RPGs?

This issue marks the 13th anniversary of the founding of DRAGON® Magazine and my sixth year on its staff. Rather than looking back at the early days of the magazine (see "The Hatchling Magazine" in this issue), looking ahead is more in order in this editorial.

DRAGON Magazine's core topic is that of role-playing games, particularly the AD&D® game. The magazine's fate thus revolves around the fortunes of these games themselves. RPGs have grown and evolved since the appearance of the fantasy combat rules in the CHAINMAIL miniatures game. But other changes have come about with more far-reaching effects.

Many RPG companies have developed specific campaign worlds for their games, and these worlds are extremely complex. Thick sourcebooks are available for RPGs of all types—but how many gamers actually use all of this material? Many gamers buy sourcebooks only to read, like buying paperback novels. Besides, how often can you get a group together to play through a 10-part quest?

Additionally, those gamers who started playing RPGs in the 1970s and early 1980s are growing older. Game designer and novelist Tracy Hickman has pointed out that as gamers (like everyone else) get older, they acquire families, homes, normal jobs, and so on. How often can you get away from work and family ties to go out and slay dragons with the gang? Not very often.

As Tracy has noted, you may not be able to get gamers together, but your computer is available on demand. You might miss having your friends around (unless you have a multiplayer game and can get family or friends to play, too). But whenever you want to play, you can play.

Better computers and programs are also available. Hack-n-slash computer games are being replaced by detailed adventures on worlds as complex as any on paper. The NPCs in these games have their own personalities and missions in life; they remember wrongs and favors done to them by your character. Some of them can "talk" to you, too, bringing with them what Tracy calls the

Continued on page 39

FORUM

"Forum" welcomes your comments and opinions on role-playing games. In the United States and Canada, write to: Forum, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Forum, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom. We ask that material submitted to "Forum" be either neatly written by hand or typed with a fresh ribbon and clean keys so we can read and understand your comments.

Having read in the September editorial (issue #137) that you would like information on disabled people and role-playing games, I would like to share the following. For five or six years, I was the Dungeon Master for an AD&D® game consisting of six to eight males and females. Each individual played one or two characters in the game environment.

During most of those years, at least one and sometimes two of the players were completely blind. (The blind players were very skeptical of the clerical *cure blindness* spell—it never totally worked for them.) As the director of an agency for the blind, I have been called upon several times to translate parts of a player's manual into braille or to tactically mark a 20-sided dice—an extremely difficult task. (In the final stage, it was an extremely large 20-sided dice.)

The ages of the players ranged from seven to sixty-two. The standard group was composed of individuals primarily in their midtwenties and midthirties. Most of these players were professionals, (e.g., computer programmers, attorneys, social workers, EEO professionals, etc.). Other than occasionally needing material in braille, the AD&D game was an exceptional game for blind and visually-impaired individuals. Most of the scenarios don't need an elaborate game board, given that the adventure environment exists in everyone's imagination. One of the seeing players kept a very detailed diary so that areas of contention could be quickly referenced and resolved.

I have often thought it would be fun to introduce a role-playing game to a nursing home group. Many of the seniors have very alert minds and might benefit from the intellectual stimulation of a role-playing game. Not all seniors will be interested in medieval settings; some might like a western setting, others a futuristic or space setting. Many might get a real kick out of World War I or World War II scenarios.

I reiterate that I believe role-playing games are excellent opportunities for disabled individuals to interact competitively and corporately with individuals who are not disabled.

Barry A. McEwen
Executive Director
The Sight Center
Toledo OH

As an avid reader of "Forum," it was refreshing to finally see in issue #141 a letter addressing a game system other than the AD&D game and a topic other than how many ways a fighter, magic-user, etc., can beat the odds.

While I agreed with the additions to the martial arts categories that Brad proposed, as a player and a judge of the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game, I feel that an additional comment should be added to the martial arts H discipline that he proposed.

As written, this discipline is designed to focus the user's internal energy by concentrating for one round. The energy can then be released in a burst giving the user an extra attack without penalty. It should be stressed, however, that this would not be of much use in an uninitiated combat situation, where the character is being attacked and is then unable to concentrate. Rather, this discipline would be best used in a stealth attack, where the combination of concentration under this discipline and the element of surprise could be used as a devastating attack against one or more opponents. Combine it again with weaponry such as a bo stick or a sword, and you'll have an exceptionally successful martial-arts attack.

Katherine York
McHenry IL

Hail thee, brave and hearty adventurer! Hast thy sword become dull or thy spell books moldy? Or hast thy DM become more concerned with details on the weather than on the adventure?

Seriously, one element that has all but disappeared from the AD&D game world is the proverbial "hack-and-slash" type game which, I'm sure, we all have enjoyed at one time or another. Remember the good old days with module S1 *Tomb of Horrors*, when you could enter a hidden crypt, spend hours puzzling out riddles and smashing skulls, then come out with a few dead characters and a lord's ransom in gold? Those types of games have all but given way to political/socioeconomic masterpieces designed to give your high-level lords a chance to govern a remote province and design tax laws for the peasants, or perhaps to test your diplomatic qualities in dealing with the various clans, tribes, nations, and hierarchies of an expansive AD&D game country.

I commend the authors of such masterful creations of fantasy gaming lexicons for their use of AD&D game rules to initiate a broad-scale campaign for the serious gamer. Yet, time after time, I have found it extremely difficult to interest a group of bloodthirsty players in the politics of their campaign or any aspect of the region's landforms. In my area, we are more interested in a long, challenging, dungeoneering game that requires player intuition as well as knee-deep, blood-and-gore fighting. My friends and I had a marvelous time playing the G1-3, D1-3, and Q1 AD&D game modules. We found they challenged our AD&D games skills of combat, magic-use, and guile as they rewarded us. Is TSR planning to release any more of these adventures? Are the golden days of the AD&D game over?

S. R. Oldson
Tallahassee FL

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I would like to respond to the letter written by Peter Kirkup (issue #137) about what appears to be the appalling return of role-playing to role-playing games. I have some concern that this gentleman feels that it is a terrible thing for people to do things other than hacking-and-slashing.

I've been playing RPGs since 1974. I remember the brother of a friend introducing us to the original rules. We started out enjoying ourselves, and I must admit that we indulged in quite a bit of monster bashing. I'm sure you've encountered this scene:

DM: "You come across an unknown creature. It is very big and looks like [anything from a dragon to a storm giant]."

Player A: "What is it?"

Player B: "Who cares? Let's kill it!"

This was usually followed by PCs getting creamed by an extremely powerful, yet ordinarily neutral, beast.

As time went on, we began to get rather tired of the simple thud-and-blunder games, so we moved on to other things.

I played many other games, including the BOOT HILL® and TOP SECRET® games, and I also got involved in simulations. I never really enjoyed violence for violence's sake, like some gamers I knew.

After eight years in the USAF (including four years at Pope AFB), I have noticed that the challenge of RPGs has vanished. I mean, I enjoy adventure, and sometimes there comes a time for PCs to get involved in the ever-popular shoot-outs and sword fights.

Perhaps my view has been biased by two years of experience in the 1st Special Operations Wing, but it seems that there is enough violence in this world without using it as the main reason for playing RPGs. In fact, if you were to ask anybody who is a veteran of RPGs, you'll find that there's enough going on that's exciting without blowing people away. There are times when violence can be useful, but charging blindly into a situation will virtually guarantee a massacre.

Mr. Kirkup quotes Gary Gygax's article in issue #102, but I think that either he or I misread that material. I took it to mean that the whole idea of role-playing is ROLE-playing—i.e., interacting with people and creatures you wouldn't meet in real life. If you just want to kill things, go smash some anthills.

Getting back to my example: That PC massacre actually happened in a game I was playing at Torrejon AFB, Spain, a few years ago. The party my PC was with charged full bore into a fight with hill giants. One PC, in addition to my assassin, waited for the results. The PCs that survived (two) didn't live long, since none of the PCs was a cleric. It turned out that the giants were chasing the same evil NPC that our party was chasing. Two PCs gained a couple of powerful allies, and the other players had to create new PCs.

Wayne Roberts
Danville VA

Ever since I started the AD&D game, I have played in a house campaign that revolves around a realistic (almost, at least) game world, much like the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ campaign. Characters are treated as if they were real, and every thing we do or act upon has consequences that could affect us, much like something real people would experience (barring, of course, the occasional dispatching of an unlucky monster). Admittedly, a competent DM has a lot to do with this fact, but a not-so-good game master brings me to my next point.

Prior to my AD&D game days, I played I.C.E.'s MIDDLE-EARTH ROLE-PLAYING™ game. The campaign was a joke. Each module I bought was used for a couple of weeks until all the dungeons in it were played out. Every time our gaming group would assembled, totally different characters were played, and no feeling of continuity was generated. I later learned, thanks to the AD&D game and a sharper DM, that I was going about it wrong—simply not playing the game in the way it should have been played.

Or was I? My query is, how do you play? Is your campaign world treated as real with direct-action-produces-results scenarios that may affect characters for the rest of their lives? Or do you game without abandon, where the DM simply says, "Okay, you're there. Do you enter the dungeon?" It would be interesting to see a little feedback in "Forum" or elsewhere concerning how some gamers enjoy doing what they do; role-playing is a highly underrated hobby and could stand a little positive publicity.

Lastly, I would like to comment on a point made by Mr. Shawn DeMers in issue #132. He mentioned the accusations he received from friends about devil worshiping and the DRAGONLANCE® saga. Here in Utah, role-playing games are subject to scorn and distrust. Many outsiders view the AD&D game as either a visage of evil or as a game too complicated to bother with.

Perhaps this narrowed perspective contributes to the entirely unfounded rumors about satanism within the AD&D game. Seeing positive (e.g., no pentagrams or drooling demons) and interesting advertisements for such a truly exceptional medium would excite the majority of true-blue role-players and possibly spark the interest of those not associated with the vast and wonderful world of fantasy role-playing.

Michael Drake
Pleasant Grove UT

In response to Sean Jump's letter in issue #138, I wonder about the ultimate goal in playing evil characters. There are good reasons for the bias in favor of good-aligned player characters in the AD&D game. First, we must remember the spirit and intention of the game. Of course, our aim is to have fun, but we must ask ourselves why we choose the excitement of FRPGs for this purpose. Ideally, these games promote cooperation, teamwork, friendship, and open communication. Are these not essentially the fundamental assumptions guiding the actions of good-aligned characters? Are not such characters devoted to one another, as well as to "the cause," whatever that might be?

It is difficult and perhaps unwise to separate the moral framework that motivates and spurs such characters from our own value systems as people. Through our actions we prove our beliefs; as the old saying goes: Actions speak louder than words. We must then ask ourselves what the true intentions of an evil PC really are and how those intentions must inevitably be fulfilled. If we adhere to the alignment system provided in the AD&D game system, then we must assume that evil "does not concern itself with rights or happiness; purpose is the determinant" (1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 23). To fully develop and make our characters believable, we must comprehend at least in some basic way the tenets our creations embody. While each of us can empathize with the desire to promote prosperity and happiness, evil should revolt and repel us, spurring us to overthrow and abolish the catalysts of atrocities against living creatures.

A party, or group of interdependent characters, underlies the foundation of the AD&D game system. How, then, can characters with the fundamental belief in the self work with others toward a mutually desirable goal? A lawful-evil character may work with others, but he sees those fellow participants as pawns or tools with which that individual may attain an ultimate outcome. Playing characters with this value system will ultimately provoke antagonism and paranoia in even the closest of groups.

Evil characters have their places, to be sure, but do we want to risk placing a destructive, manipulative, and antisocial character in the hands of a player who must attempt to foster at least a superficial form of unity and solidarity within the group, as well as undertake a thorough understanding of and attraction for that character? Such evil characters should remain in the hands of the DM, who undertakes the impetus and final resolution of the party's endeavors. To allow evil characters is to disrupt the relationship of the DM and the players; the players would then be forced to create, maintain, and resolve conflicts based on their own individual caprices.

I do not mean to infer in any way that those who play evil characters possess such traits inherent in their diabolical creations. I am merely suggesting that playing these characters is in direct opposition to the spirit of teamwork, cooperation, and desirable interdependence that makes FRPGs a unique and socially desirable community event through which we not only have fun, but through which we learn a few things about trust and our need to care for one another. Evil and horror may fascinate us even while they repel, but let's not fall prey to those demons; we must instead work both as PC party and as human beings in the struggle to achieve their downfall.

Daniel Reardon
Troy NY

In issue #143, there is a letter from Stanley Bundy that I'm in total disagreement with. He writes that players who played evil characters made the main role-playing group in Corbin, Ky. fall apart. He goes on to say, "All evil characters do for a campaign or group is lead to the game's destruction." He also says, "It is the people who run and play in evil campaigns who have given role-playing games . . . their bad reputation."

I've been a GM for seven years, and I find that players enjoy playing evil characters much more than the traditional good characters. Most beginning players like playing good or lawful characters that are brave and noble. But after a while, saving princesses, slaying dragons, and trying to rid the land of thieves gets repetitive, and PCs find that their alignments hinder them in some actions.

It is much more exciting to play evil characters. I find that the characters have a greater chance to be creative if they're trying to do things such as getting away from a group of good adventurers who want to do away with them, or explaining to a castle guard what they were doing in the king's treasure room. Sometimes the most fun you have while being evil is getting caught.

I've noticed that in most articles and letters in DRAGON Magazine, evil characters go around killing and stealing from everyone else in the group. Most of the groups I've GMed for have evil characters in them, and players with evil characters have never given me trouble. In fact, in groups that consist solely of evil PCs, there is

Continued on page 103



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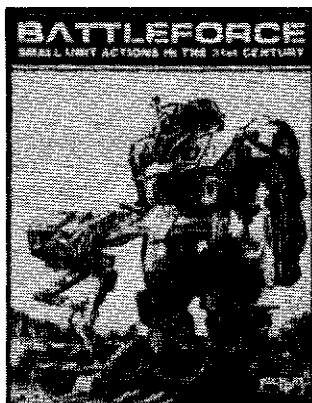
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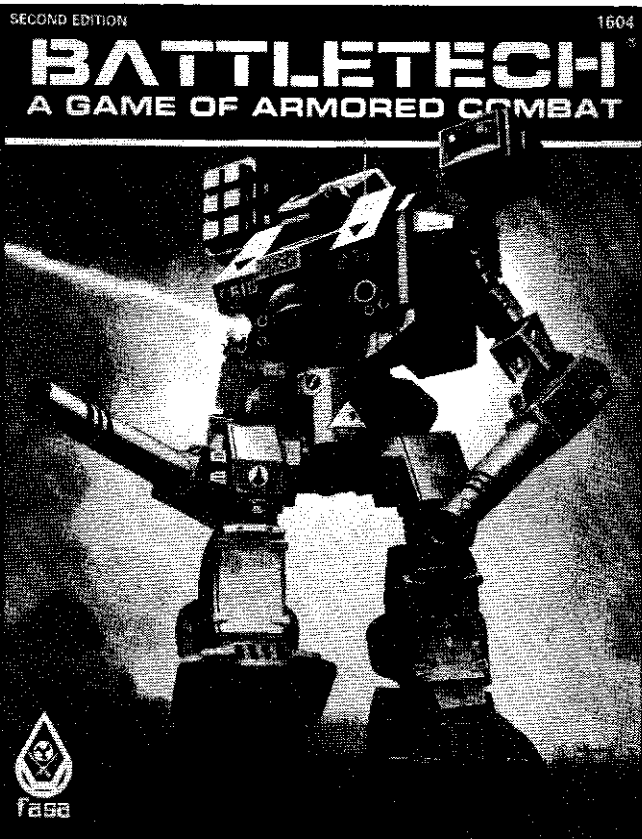
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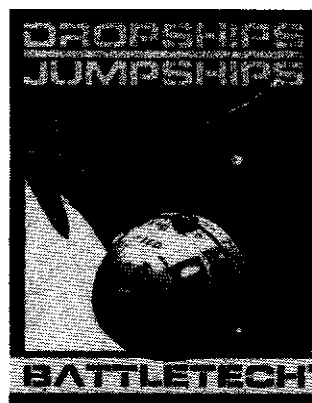
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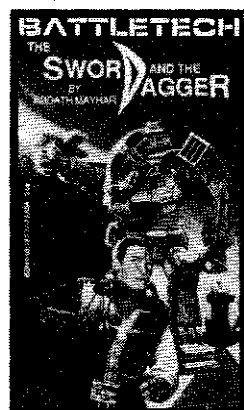
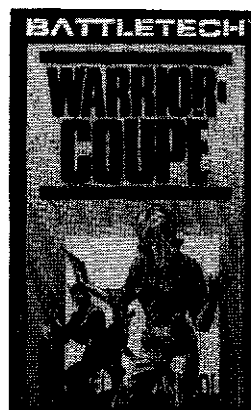
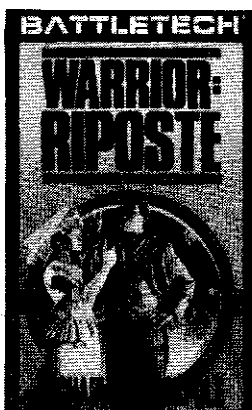
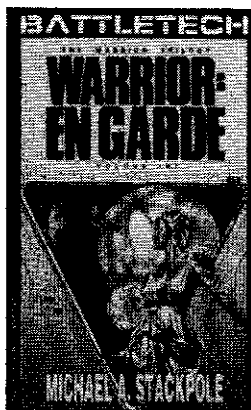
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SAGE ADVICE



Illustration by Jeff Easley

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This month, the sage gingerly examines some of the magical items of the AD&D® game universe—and the controversies that surround their use. All information in this article concerns the AD&D 1st Edition game, and references to the Dungeon Masters Guide and Players Handbook are to the 1st Edition game versions of those volumes. In all cases, the information in the AD&D 2nd Edition game volumes take precedence where there is a contradiction between those rules and the information in this article.

General questions

The DMG says that magical items usable only to certain classes must be made by members of that class. How do fighters, for instance, make magical swords?

The DMG does *not* say that items usable only by certain classes can only be made by those classes. You seem to be confused by the section at the top of the second column on page 116, which limits magic-users to the fabrication of magic-user items and those items usable by classes that can't fabricate items themselves.

What the DMG does say is that a magical item—except one usable only by clerics—requires the use of an *enchant an item* spell in its creation. There are, however, three exceptions to this rule.

First, items usable only by or directly associated with demi-humans (such as the *hammer +3*, *dwarven thrower*) can only be created by very old, intelligent, and wise demi-humans of maximum level. Exactly how this is done is not important, because PCs cannot create them in any case, although individual DMs might wish to specify a process anyway (see the DMG, page 116, first column).

Second, items usable only by illusionists require the illusionists' equivalent of *enchant an item*. In some campaigns, this is assumed to be a *major creation* spell cast upon an item in the same manner as a mage casts *enchant an item*. The procedures that illusionists must follow are discussed on page 118 of the DMG.

Third, magical tomes, librums, manuals, artifacts, and relics are assumed to have been created by lost civilizations or by deities. Again, the exact procedure is unspecified because such items can never be created by PCs. Certain other items, such as a *deck of many things*, might also fall into this category, at the DM's option.

A cleric of 11th or higher level prepares to create a magical item by gathering rare materials and constructing high-quality items, just as a magic-user does. But, instead of using an *enchant an item* spell, a cleric must make further investments in robes and other accouterments for worship. The cleric then prays over the item he wishes to enchant until his deity sees fit to enchant it. The details of the procedure are similar to those of the *enchant an item* spell.



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What spell is cast upon a magical item to create something with a magical "plus," for either combat or saving-throw purposes?

The item's creator must cast an *enchant an item* spell or its equivalent on the item. Since a "plus" is not a spell effect per se, no additional spells are required, but additional casting time is required. Each "plus" counts as a fourth-level spell cast upon the item (see the *enchant an item* spells description in the *Players Handbook*, pages 83-84).

Will a bless spell from a cleric turn a cursed item into a useful one?

A *bless* spell from a cleric will not "fix" a *cursed* item, but a *remove curse* spell might work. See the individual descriptions of *cursed* items in the *DMG*.

Will magical protections vs. fire or cold reduce the doubled damage inflicted on an attacker if he strikes someone using a *fire shield* spell? For example, will a *ring of fire resistance* protect the attacker if he strikes a magic-user using the hot-flame version of the spell?

No. The spell surrounds the caster with a field of force that is the same no matter which version the caster chooses. The field uses the energy of incoming attacks to inflict sympathetic damage on attackers. This magical damage is neither fire- nor cold-based.

How much experience would a barbarian character get for destroying Asmodeus's rod? How much damage do the rod's blasts of fire, cold, etc., do?

Asmodeus's rod is an artifact and cannot be destroyed in the same manner as any other item; it also has no experience-point value, per se. The DM might decide what the proper procedure for destroying the rod would be, then assign an experience-point value for fulfilling the quest, but this would be treated just like any other experience award and would be divided among all the participating characters. The rod duplicates the effects of the frost, acid, or lightning breath weapon of a huge, ancient dragon of the appropriate type (i.e., 64 hp acid, 80 hp lightning, or 56 hp frost damage). The rod does not produce fire (see the *Monster Manual*, page 21, "Asmodeus").

Arms & armor

The *DMG*, on page 164, says that magical armor is weightless—but it also says, on page 28, that magical armor only weighs half as much as normal armor of the same sort. So how much does magical armor really weigh?

It must be said that the term "weightless" is a "misnomer." If armor were actually weightless, it would float away.

You can resolve this contradiction in one of three ways. First, you can just use the rule on page 28: Magical armor weighs half as much as normal armor, has half the normal encumbrance, and allows movement at the next higher rate. (This does not mean, as one reader suggested, that a human in magical leather moves at 15". Magical armor negates movement reductions but does not increase the base movement speed.) Second, you can just use the rule on page 164: Armor weighs virtually nothing. Third, you can split the difference and rule that magical armor has normal weight but is totally unencumbering (or only half as encumbering) because of its magical nature. This last option has the additional benefit of preventing characters from simply weighing a set of unknown armor against a normal set of armor in order to determine if the unknown armor is magical or not. Normal armor weights are on page 27 of the *DMG*.

Are magical shields, weapons, and other items weightless, as are magical armors?

There is some discussion over how much magical armor really weighs in the previous question. All other magical items weigh just as much and have the same encumbrances as normal items of the same sort. See the *Players Handbook*, page 37, and *Unearthed Arcana*, page 26, for weapon weights. Normal shield weights are on page 27 of the *DMG*. Magical item

weights might be guessed by examining Appendix 0 (on page 225) of the *DMG*.

Do bracers of defense work even if the wearer is sleeping or is attacked from behind? Does armor give full benefits under these circumstances? How about shields?

Bracers of defense give their base armor class to the wearer whether he is sleeping or is attacked from the flank or rear (see the *DMG*, page 139). Note the standard modifiers for such attacks, however (see the *DMG*, page 70). The same holds true for armor. Shields only work against frontal attacks and only if consciously used.

What would be the armor class of a character with an 18 dexterity who wears elfin chain mail and bracers of defense AC 2?

The *bracers* work normally in spite of the armor, but the armor and *bracers* are not cumulative. The character's armor class is -2 from the front.

Do normal weapons glow? Do magical swords glow all the time? Does a sword +2 shed more light than a sword +1?

Only magical swords glow, but a sword could be enchanted to glow even if it had no magical bonuses. (A *light* or *continual light* spell could be cast on a normal weapon, of course.) The DM decides when a magical sword glows. Many DMs rule that a sword will glow only when it is in the hands of its wielder; otherwise, characters could spot magical swords by their light. The glow is not under the wielder's control, however, unless the weapon's description says it is. The size of the sword, not the sword's combat bonuses, determines how much light it sheds (see the *Players Handbook*, page 102).

How do you determine which limb is severed when the to-hit roll indicates that a sword of sharpness has severed an extremity?

The easiest way would be to assign a number or group of numbers to each extremity, then roll a die. A human, for example, has five extremities (a head, two arms, and two legs). Roll 1d10: 1,2 = head; 3,4 = right arm; and so on. A lizard man has six extremities (a head, four limbs, and a tail), so you would roll 1d6. You could create several complex tables taking into account the reach of the weapon, the facing of the target, and so on, but why bother? (See the *DMG*, page 166, for details.)

When using a sword +2, giant slayer are strength bonuses to damage doubled along with the rest of the damage inflicted?

No. Only the sword's base damage is doubled; the sword's +3 bonus vs. giants, and any strength bonuses that go with it,

continued on page 56



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by David E. Cates

Dragons are Wizards' Best Friends

Some unfamiliar familiars for deserving mages

This article describes five unusual relatives of the faerie dragon. They were created in my campaign to be "greater familiars," the familiars of spell-casters of high levels who would find a normal familiar to be a handicap rather than a benefit. However, I found myself planning adventures and encounters with these creatures that had nothing to do with their being familiars. My adventuring group was soon surrounded by quicklings wielding lances and riding demon drakes, and later a group of shadow drakes set out to prove which one was the greatest prankster—at the PCs' expense.

These familiars are intended for wizards and illusionists of at least 12th level. Since the spell *find familiar* is not among those first-level wizard spells available to illusionists, some means must be found to let illusionists acquire these familiars, such as the use of *wish* rings. Deities might grant a favored cleric or druid an animal companion that is, to all intents and purposes, a familiar. Certain spell-casting dragons in my campaign world have used their own version of the *find familiar* spell, and they acquire these lesser dragons as their own familiars!

Care must be taken with these familiars. They should not be allowed in the game unless the wizards they bond with are able to protect and care for them. They are not intended to be mobile spell-casting devices for each spell-caster's pleasure, but they are generally powerful enough to survive battles where high-level magic is being tossed around. If lower-level wizards want such familiars, the familiars should be young, very young, or perhaps even in egg form when acquired. It should be very rare for a very old or ancient lesser dragon to become a familiar, as such dragons are the patriarchs of their dragon-tribes and are necessary for the defense of their lairs.

In all cases, these lesser dragons have the same age categories as do dragons, as given in *the Monster Manual*, page 29, but otherwise share none of the usual characteristics of dragons unless so noted. Hit dice are rerolled at each age level, rather than increasing the number of hit points per hit die.

Crystal Drake

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
NO. APPEARING: 1-6
ARMOR CLASS: 2
MOVE: 9"/18" (MC: A)
HIT DICE: *See Table 1*
% IN LAIR: 20%
TREASURE TYPE: *E, Q*
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 bite and 2 claws
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See Table 1*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Minor breath weapon, up to major spell use*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Spell immunities, magic resistance, high intelligence, ethereal travel, special minor powers from eating gems, up to major spell use*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See Table 2*
INTELLIGENCE: *Low to high*
ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic good*
SIZE: S (*see Table 1*)
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
CHANCE OF:
 Speaking: 90%
 Magic use: 50%
 Sleeping: 30%
LEVEL/XP VALUE: *Up to VI/775 + 6 per hit point (maximum age and abilities)*

This nomadic offshoot of the faerie dragon prefers caves and caverns in uncivilized deserts for its lairs, but lone wanderers may be found in any clime, especially near gem deposits. Some clans led by ancient crystal drakes have found their ways into the plane of elemental Earth, where they seek gems.

Crystal drakes are noted for their scintillating, crystal-like hides, and some unscrupulous hunters trap and kill these wondrous creatures to gain their skins. Crystal drake hides are popular in many lands and make beautiful leather apparel that flashes and sparkles in the light. Even lands that have outlawed the sale of crystal drake hides usually have buyers for these illegal goods. An unmarred hide from a mature, adult crystal drake brings as much as 1,000 gp. The crystal drake's hide is the prime component of a *robe of scintillating colors*, but such hides must be specially gathered and treated to be used for this purpose. The same hide that causes these miniature dragons to be hunted also gives them an unusually low armor class and immunity to many spells.

Though crystal drakes enjoy a good joke, they play their tricks only when they will not bring attention to their lairs. They often spy upon a passing group of intelligent creatures known to be carrying gems; if they satisfy themselves that the creatures are safe to trade with, these drakes might offer to trade gold and other items for jewels. This trading always takes place some distance from their lairs, as crystal drakes have learned to be very wary of travelers—even friendly ones.

Crystal drakes can spit acid four times a day. They expel this acid with great force

and accuracy (gaining a +4 to hit). This acid does double damage against creatures or objects composed of earth, stone, or crystal (see Table 1).

All ancient crystal drakes are known to have the ability to go ethereal once per week, and they have the ability to transport up to four of their clan members with them. These ancient drakes often use this ability to travel to and forage on the plane of elemental Earth, as well as to escape capture or worse.

Because of the nature of crystal-drake hides and their inherent magical abilities, some spells behave in an odd manner when used against such a creature. *Color spray*, *energy drain*, *hypnotic pattern*, *lightning* and other electrical attacks like *shocking grasp*, and *sunray* spells are instantly reflected back upon the caster. *Magic missiles* are reflected back to the caster only if the drake makes a saving throw vs. wands, harming the drake if the saving throw is failed. *Eyebite*, *prismatic sphere*, *prismatic spray*, *prismatic wall*, and *rainbow pattern* spells have no effect on the drakes. *Light* and continual light spells cannot blind them—however, these latter two spells, if successfully cast on a crystal drake, blind anyone within 20' who fails a saving throw vs. spells. This blindness lasts 2-12 rounds.

Only 50% of all crystal drakes have the ability to cast spells throughout their lives. Fully 50% of these spell-casters choose to cast wizard spells; 20% become shamans of their lairs and have both cleric and illusionist spells, like a multiclassed character. Another 15% cast only illusionist spells, and 15% cast only druid spells. As they progress in age, their spell-casting abilities increase, as shown in Table 2. Old crystal drakes that have no previous spell-casting talents always develop the ability to cast cleric spells as a 1st-level cleric. They gain one additional level of spell-casting ability with each following age level, becoming 3rd-level clerics at ancient age. Most spell-casting powers are taught by the elders of each group of crystal drakes, through a teaching process that involves no writing or spell books. Cleric and druid spells, however, appear to be granted by an unknown power perhaps a demigod.

Crystal drakes are very fond of jewels, gems, and crystals. They each have two cheek pouches, much like hamsters, in which they can store up to four gems. Their senses of smell and taste are very keen, and they can actually sense the presence of precious stones within 10'. Indeed, crystals, gems, and jewels are a necessary part of a crystal drake's diet. Each drake must consume at least 5 gp of gems per week, or its hide loses its crystal-line sheen and the powers associated with it. A crystal drake loses one point of armor class per week without the diet of gems, down to a minimum of AC 5. Once its proper diet is reestablished, it gains its

Table 1
Crystal Drakes' Statistics

Crystal drake age	Length	Hit dice	Bite damage	Claw damage	Breath weapon	Base AC
Very young	1'	½	1	0	0	7
Young	1'6"	1	1-2	0	1	6
Sub-adult	1'9"	1+3	1-3	0	1-2	5
Young adult	2'	2	1-4	1	1-3	4
Adult	2'3"	3	1-6	1	1-4	3
Old	2'6"	4	1-6	1-2	1-6	2
Very old	2'6"	5	2-8	1-3	2-8	1
Ancient	2'6"	5+3	2-8	1-4	2-8	0

armor class back at the same rate. For each week without a gem diet, there is a cumulative 25% chance that its spell-reflecting power will not function. After one month without eating the required amount of gemstones, the crystal drake's immunity to the spells given above is lost, and its hide becomes a dull gray. Even if the specific spell immunity is lost, the crystal drake still retains its natural resistance to magic.

Ingesting certain gemstones has strange effects upon crystal drakes. They are aware of these effects and often carry

some of these gems in their mouth pouches for emergencies. For a gemstone to affect a crystal drake, a minimum amount of that particular gem must be consumed. These gems and effects are given in Table 3. Only one of these gem effects can be in effect at one time. If a new gem is ingested before the effects of the last gem is over, the prior effects are lost.

Crystal drakes speak their own language, their alignment tongue, and 1-4 other languages, as chosen by the DM.

Crystal Drake



Illustration by Paul Jaquays

Table 2
Crystal Drakes' Spell Abilities

Crystal drake age	Magic resistance	Wizard level	Cleric level	Druid level	Illusionist level
Very young	5%	0 *	0 **	0 ***	0 ****
Young	10%				
Sub-adult	12%	1	1	1	1
Young adult	15%	2	2	2	2
Adult	20%	3	3	3	3
Old	25%	4	4	4	4
Very old	30%	5	5	5	5
Ancient	35%	6	6	6	6

* At this age, the crystal drake may use four magic-user (wizard) cantrips, as per *Unearthed Arcana*.

* * At this age, the crystal drake may use four clerics' orisons, as per DRAGON® issue #108, "Cantrips for Clerics."

* * * At this age, the crystal drake may use four druidical orisons, as per DRAGON issue #108, "Cantrips for Clerics," and issue #119, "Cantrips for Druids—Naturally."

* * * * At this age, the crystal drake may use four illusionist cantrips, as per *Unearthed Arcana*.

Note: All crystal drakes of sub-adult age or older are able to substitute four cantrips or orisons in place of a first-level spell.

Table 3
Crystal Drakes' Special Gem Powers

Gemstone type	Min. gp value consumed	Effect and duration
Alexandrite	100	Adds +2 to saving throws for one turn
Amber	100	Grants immunity to disease for 3 rounds, or cures same
Amethyst	100	Grants immunity to paralysis and poison for 1 turn, or cures same
Beryl	100	Improves armor class by two steps for 1 turn
Carbuncle	100	Allows use of polymorph <i>self</i> into dragon form 10 X larger in size, once per week
Chrysoprase	100	Grants <i>improved invisibility</i> (as per the illusionist spell) for 2-8 rounds
Coral	100	Grants immunity to insanity for 10 turns, or cures same
Hematite	10	Heals 1-4 hp damage, up to four times per day
Jacinth	250	Grants a + 1 on all saving throws and armor class for 2-8 hours
Jasper	50	Grants +4 to saving throws vs. poison for 1 turn, or allows for a new saving throw at + 4 if consumed after eater was poisoned
Lapis lazuli	50	Adds + 1 to to-hit scores for 1 turn
Peridot	250	Adds +4 to all saving throws for 1 turn
Ruby	100	Adds + 2 to saving throws, and acts as a luckstone, for 1 turn
Sapphire	250	Allows the casting of known spells only as if one level higher, only once per day
Topaz	250	Creates a <i>minor globe of invulnerability</i> around the eater for 1 turn

Note: See the 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide*, pages 26-27, for the possible effects of other consumed gems.

Table 4
Demon Drakes' Statistics

Demon drake age	Magic resistance	Hit dice	Length	Claw damage	Butt damage *	Breath damage (major)	Breath damage (minor)
Very young	12%	½	1'	-	1	1-4	1
Young	18%	1	1'6"	1	1-2	1-4	1
Sub-adult	24%	1 + 3	2'	1	1-3	1-6	1-2
Young adult	30%	2	2'3"	1	1-4	1-6	1-3
Adult	36%	2 + 3	2'6"	1	1-4	1-8	1-4
Old	42%	3	2'9"	1-2	1-6	2-8	1-4
Very old	48%	4	3'	1-2	1-6	1-10	1-6
Ancient	54%	5	3'3"	1-3	2-8	1-10	1-6

* Damage from biting is equal to the butt-damage value minus 1 hp, with a minimum value of 1 hp damage.

Demon Drake

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-4

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 9"/24" (MC: A)

HIT DICE: *See Table 4*

% IN LAIR: 25%

TREASURE TYPE: S, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 *claws and either 1 head butt or 1 bite*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See Table 4*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breath weapon, up to major spell use*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Invisibility, fire resistance, magic resistance, high intelligence, up to major spell use*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See Table 4*

INTELLIGENCE: *Average to high*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic neutral, chaotic evil*

SIZE: S (1-3' long)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 90%

Magic use: 80%

Sleeping: 30%

LEVEL/XP VALUE: *Up to V/400 + 5 per hit point (maximum age and abilities)*

Demon drakes appear to be miniature red dragons with sharp, devilish horns on the tops of their heads and fixed, evil grins. Females have orange underbellies; males are red all over.

Demon drakes usually live near or in volcanic vents, but they can also be found in caverns and many barren-landscapes. Small groups of demon drakes often associate with salamanders and lair nearby. Quicklings are known to form alliances with demon drakes and ride them into battle.

Demon drakes are naturally resistant to fires, as per *rings of fire resistance*. They can also use *improved invisibility* on themselves twice per day, being able to attack and cast spells without turning visible.

The demon drake has two forms of cone-shaped fiery breath weapons. The cone shape of the major attack form is ¼" in diameter at the drake's mouth, and it spreads out until it is 3' wide at its far end. The cone of flame is 8' long; see Table 4 for damage statistics, which are based on age (half damage is take if the victim makes a saving throw vs. breath weapons). This attack form may be made only four times per day. Demon drakes may also breath a lesser amount of fire an unlimited number of times per day. This minor breath weapon is only 4' long and 2' across at the far end. Demon drakes are immune to other demon drakes' breath weapons.

Demon drakes are not really vicious in nature, but they defend their lairs with great single-mindedness. In such cases, they attack as if they had two additional hit dice, and their breath weapons do an additional 1-4 hp damage. Like the faerie dragons, demon drakes are infamous for



Demon Drake

their practical jokes and go out of their ways to plan and execute them. However, their practical jokes go beyond what might be considered funny or safe, sometimes resulting in real harm to the victims.

Demon drakes able to use spells will employ illusionist spells, but as they grow older, they gain a small selection of wizard and cleric spells. Unlike their cousins, their spells are not selected only on the basis of their mischief potential. Spell-casting demon drakes gain spells at the same rate that illusionists do, each hit die equaling a level. One in 24 magic-using demon drakes is a lair shaman and gains both cleric and illusionist spells at the same time, like a multiclassed character. Spell-casting demon drakes also gain one first-level wizard spell at old, very old, and ancient ages each. All demon drakes (even those that do not normally use spells) gain a first-level cleric spell at ancient age, including lair shamans, who have that spell in addition to their others. Most spells are taught by the elders of the demon drake group, except for the cleric spells, which appear to be gained from an unknown source.

Demon drakes also have unique spells that the elders of their race pass on to deserving youths who manage to prepare

and execute what are referred to as "grandmaster" practical jokes. These practical jokes must be fairly subtle and affect at least a small community of creatures or a single creature whose innate power is such that the joke deserves merit. Creating an illusion of human women bathing in cool water, tempting a hunter to wade into lava, is a basic practical joke not worthy of grandmaster status. If the "women" were actually female goblins, encountered on multiple occasions by an elite patrol, the joke might be worth consideration.

Demon drakes sometimes kidnap and ransom elven, half-elven, halfling, human, brownie, leprechaun, pixie, quickling, and sprite maidens. During their time of capture, these maids are treated like princesses by the entire tribe. The ransom demand might be a minor quest to benefit the tribe or the payment of some valuable item the tribe desires. However, depending upon their infatuation with their new "princess," the demon drakes might gift her with treasures worth double the ransom they demand. It is an honor to be kidnapped by demon drakes—at least, in the eyes of the kidnappers. They allow the maid to leave after six months even if no ransom is paid. It is considered an insult if they return the maiden prematurely.

Demon drake clans are located near some source of sulfur, hence their preoccupation with lairing in or near volcanic vents. They must consume a few ounces of sulfur every week, or their fiery breath weakens. After several weeks without sulfur, the damage from their breath is reduced by half (round fractions down).

Demon drakes speak a variant of the faerie-dragon language as well as their alignment tongue. Most also speak salamander, quickling, elven, leprechaun, or pixie. They have 120' infravision and excellent night sight.

The following are three unique demon drake spells. A young-adult demon drake has usually earned at least one unique first-level spell, while an old demon drake might have all three spells that follow, as well as others the DM might create.

Pretty—Oops! (Illusion/Alteration)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M

Range: 0 CT: 1 round

Duration: *Special* ST: *Negates*

Area of Effect: ½ cubic foot

Explanation/Description: This spell may be cast upon small living creatures or small inanimate objects. If cast upon a

living creature, the creature is allowed a saving throw vs. paralysis, or it is paralyzed for 5-8 hours. Each hour after the fourth hour, the creature is entitled to another saving throw. If the saving throw succeeds, the creature immediately recovers. If still paralyzed at the end of eight hours, the creature automatically recovers. A piece of wool, bird down, or similar item is required for casting the spell.

When the spell is cast, the demon drake concentrates upon the illusory form it wishes the object or victim to take. The form should be of the same approximate shape and size of the object or creature upon which the spell is cast. A poisonous snake might be transformed into a jeweled dagger, a hornet's nest into a sealed container, and a cockatrice into a sleeping lap dog.

Should a creature or object with *pretty—oops!* be touched or take damage, it automatically transforms into its original form. Detect illusion spells reveal this magical disguise for what it is.

Slither—Hiss! (Illusion/Evocation)

Level: 2 Components: V,S,M

Range: 30' CT: 1 round

Duration: 24 hours ST: *Negates*

Area of Effect: 10' diameter sphere

Explanation/Description: Demon drakes use this spell to guard their caverns from intruders. The spell is closely related to *magic mouth* but with a twist. The material component of this spell is a lizard skin or snake skin. The spell is able to discern between different creatures as does the *magic mouth* spell, and can be programmed to activate against a specific type of intruder.

When the spell is activated by an intruding creature, a rustling, slithering sound is heard, seeming to come from farther inside the cave or in the direction the intruder is traveling. This sound is discernible whether the intruder is noisy or quiet. The sound is obviously that of something large and serpentine. Each intruding creature is allowed a saving throw vs. spells; those that fail to save become uneasy and catch glimpses of something huge and foreboding in most every shadow and crevice. These victims each fall prey to a *spook* spell 1-4 rounds later, if they remain within the spell's area of effect.

Table 5
Faerie Dragons' Ages and Spells

Belly color	Magic resistance	Age	Hit dice	Mage spells				Druid spells			
				C	1	2	3	C	1	2	3
Red	20%	Very young	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Red-orange	25%	Young	2 + 2	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Orange	30%	Sub-adult	2 + 4	4	0	0	0	4	1	0	0
Yellow	35%	Young adult	3	4	1	0	0	4	2	1	0
Green	40%	Adult	3 + 2	4	2	0	0	4	3	2	0
Blue-green	45%	Old	3 + 4	4	3	1	0	5	4	2	0
Blue	55%	Very old	4	5	4	2	0	5	5	3	0
Violet	60%	Ancient	5	5	5	2	1	5	5	4	1

Table 6
Faerie Drakes' Attacks and Immunities

Body color	Breath weapon's type and frequency	Breath weapon's shape and dimensions	Attack type immunity
Black	Acid, 3 X /day	Line shaped, ½" X 40'	Acid
Blue	Electric bolt, 3 X /day	Line shaped, 1" X 30'	Electricity
Brass	<i>Fear</i> gas, 4 X /day	Cloud shaped, see below	Poison
Bronze	<i>Repulsion</i> gas, 5 X /day	Cloud shaped, see below	Electricity
Copper	Slow venom, 5 X /day	Line shaped, ½" X 40'	Acid
Gold	Fire or chlorine gas, 3 X /day	Cone shaped, see below	Fire and poison
Green	Chlorine gas, 3 X /day	Cone shaped, see below	Poison
Red	Fire, 3 X /day	Cone shaped, see below	Fire
Silver	Frost cone, 3 X /day	Cone shaped, see below	Cold
White	<i>Paralyzing</i> gas, 3 X /day	Cloud shaped, see below	Cold

Breath weapon notes:

Line shaped: This breath weapon starts at the creature's mouth and stretches out toward the target in a straight line. Each type of this breath weapon has its own diameter and range as shown. Diameters are given in real inches.

Cloud shaped: This breath weapon billows forth from the drake's mouth to form a 5' X 5' cloud, 2' high, around its target.

Cone shaped: This breath weapon begins at the drake's mouth (here, the cloud is ¼" in diameter) and spreads out to 3' wide at its end. The cone-shaped cloud is 8' long.

Pretty—Boom! (Illusion/Evocation/Alteration)

Level: 3 Components: V,S,M

Range: 0 CT: 1 round

Duration: 24 hours ST: 1/2

Area of Effect: 10' sphere

Explanation/Description: The material component for this spell is a gem of at least 1 gp value. When cast, the gem takes on the appearance of a gem of 10-100 times its real value. This enchantment lasts exactly 24 hours. At the end of this time, the gem explodes with great force, doing 3-12 hp damage to anyone within 5'. Those within 10' are allowed a saving throw vs. wands; if successful, they take half damage. The explosion is based upon force, not fire. The burst produces shrapnel-like shards capable of turning a backpack, bag, or pouch into shreds while still doing damage to the bearer of the item. If the gem explodes in a *bag of holding* or *portable hole*, the item is destroyed, but the bearer of the bag or hole takes no damage.

The caster of the spell may dispel this spell before it explodes simply by speaking a command word within 10' of the gem. Only the caster can so deactivate the *pretty—boom!* gem, even if another spellcaster knows the command word. *Dispel magic* works normally against this spell.

Alternately, the demon drake may choose not to have the gem explode. Instead, the gem might evaporate into a *stinking cloud*, as per the wizard spell, or might explode with a great noise but doing only 1 hp damage and creating a 20'-diameter cloud of sulfurous smoke lasting one turn.

Faerie Drake

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-8

ARMOR CLASS: 4

MOVE: 6"/24"/9" (MC: A)

HIT DICE: *See Table 5*

% IN LAIR: 25%

TREASURE TYPE: S, T, U

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws and 1 bite

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-2/1-2/1-4

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Minor breath weapon, minor spell use*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Magic resistance, invisibility minor defensive powers, minor spell use, spell immunities*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See Table 5*

INTELLIGENCE: *Low to average*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral, chaotic neutral*

SIZE: *S (1½-2' long)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

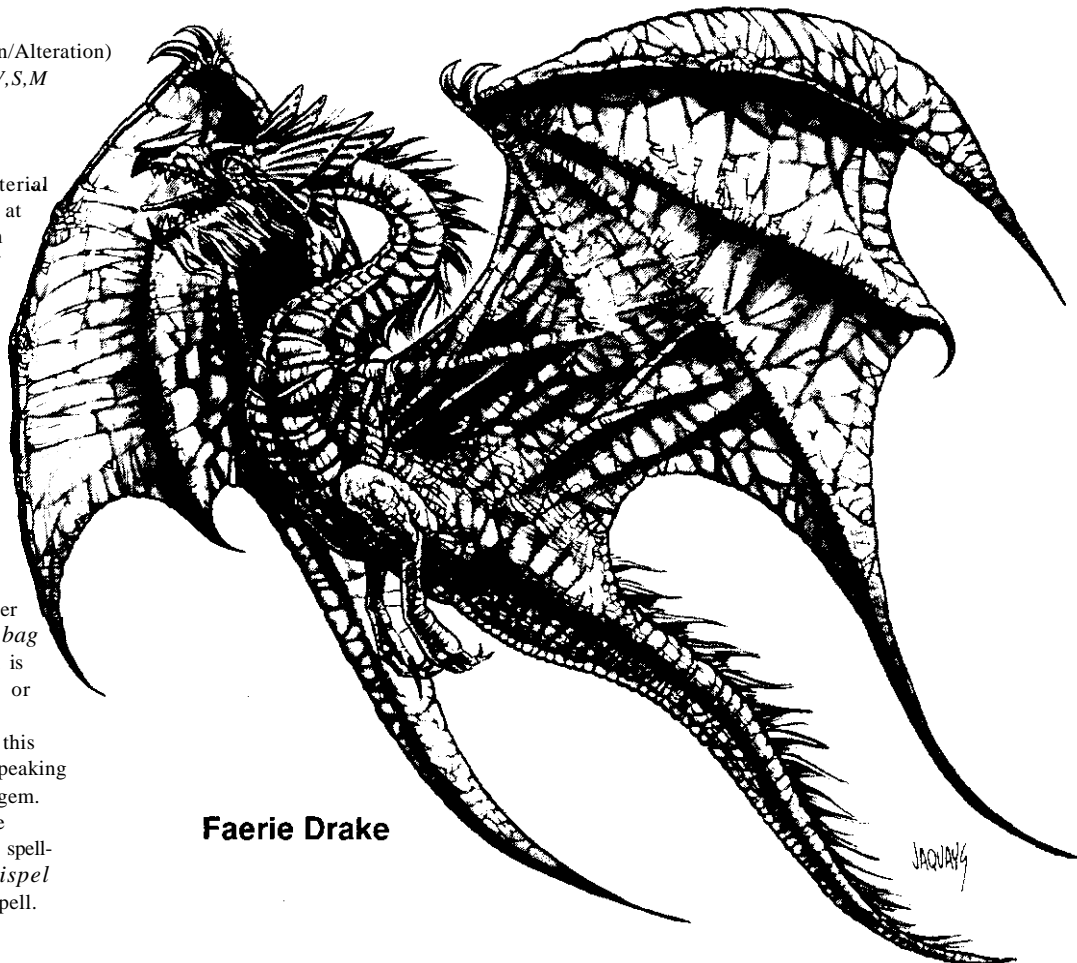
CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 80%

Magic use: 100%

Sleeping: 30%

LEVEL/XP VALUE: *Up to V/365 + 5 per hit point (maximum age and abilities)*



Faerie Drake

The faerie drake is a close relative of the faerie dragon. It is slightly larger than its cousin but has its own distinctive appearance and abilities. Faerie drakes look like miniature dragons with striped or spotted wings, prehensile tails, and a metallic sheen to their wings and scales. Females have wing tips with a shade of color lighter than their body color. Males have wing tips darker than their body color and also have a stronger metallic sheen than females. The underbelly scale color denotes a faerie dragon's age (see Table 5).

Faerie drakes have innate spell abilities that slowly increase as they grow older. Only drakes of young adult and older ages have offensive spells. Most prefer spells

useful in their everyday lives (as selected by the DM); such spells are taught by the older members of a faerie drake group. Faerie drakes have been known to associate with and spy upon wizards and druids, especially while the latter learn and cast their spells. It is conjectured that watching such activities enables faerie drakes to learn spells other than those they acquire early in life.

A faerie drake's body color reveals what sort of breath weapon and attack immunity it possesses (see Table 6). The bronze faerie drake's *repulsion* gas causes opponents to move away from the faerie drake for six rounds unless they successfully make saving throws vs. dragon breath.

Table 7

Faerie Drake's Innate Defenses

Wing

markings

Black *Obscurement*, 3 X /day

Blue *Blink*, 3 X /day

Brass *Mirror image*, 3 X /day

Bronze *Scare*, 3 X /day

Copper *En tangle*, 4 X /day

Gold *Polymorph self*, 2 X /day

Green *Regeneration*, perm.

Red *Haste*, 1 X /day

Silver *Gaseous form*, 2 X /day

White *Control temperature*, 3 X /day

Duration or level of abilities

As per druid spell at 5th level of ability

As per mage spell at 5th level of ability

As per mage spell at 5th level of ability

As per mage spell at 5th level of ability

As per druid spell at 5th level of ability

As per mage spell at 7th level of ability
1 hp/six turns

As per mage spell at 7th level of ability

As per potion, with a duration equal to the faerie dragons' hit dice in turns

As per druid spell at 6th level of ability

The copper faerie drake's slow venom causes victims to move and attack at one-half normal unless they make their saving throw vs. dragon breath; this effect lasts for six rounds. All other attacks do damage equal to the drake's hit points, or half that if a save vs. dragon breath is successfully made.

The color of a faerie dragon's wing markings is related to its innate magical defense, as shown in Table 7. These magical defenses often mimic wizard or druid spells, but they come into effect at will.

Like faerie dragons, faerie drakes can become invisible at will. They also have 120' infravision and very keen senses of smell. These drakes are very fond of swimming, diving, and fishing; one can stay submerged and active for up to three turns, or twice that if inactive. While submerged, they move through the water with great speed and maneuverability. They are even more at home in the air, being able to hover and dart about. Faerie drakes are omnivores and enjoy fish, berries, and small-animal meat. They usually mate for life. If encountered in a lair, there is a 10% chance that 1-4 faerie drake eggs are concealed in the nest.

Shadow Drake

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-3

ARMOR CLASS: 5

MOVE: 9"/24" (MC: A)

HIT DICE: *See Table 8*

% IN LAIR: 25%

TREASURE TYPE: Q, T, U

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 *bite*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Major spell use, major darkness/shadow powers, surprise bonus in darkness*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *High intelligence, create darkness, astral travel, magic resistance, major spell use, major darkness/shadow powers*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See Table 8*

INTELLIGENCE: *Average to high*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral, chaotic neutral*

SIZE: *S (See Table 8)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 90%

Magic use: 30%

Sleeping: 40%

LEVEL/XP VALUE: *Up to VI/750 + 6 per hit dice (maximum age and abilities)*

The shadow drake enjoys dark caves and heavily shadowed, peaceful forests. Sometimes one lairs near a group of pixies or brownies. Unlike other lesser dragons, they do not avoid civilized areas, sometimes creeping into cities at night. Their statistics are in Table 8.

A shadow drake has an unusual innate power. In darkness or heavy shadows, it seems to merge with the shadows, becoming *invisible* even to ultravision and infra-

vision. This drake enjoys stealth and is almost noiseless in flight, surprising foes five in six times if the area is in shadow or darkness. This drake can attack from shadows or darkness without becoming visible to prey. Its tiny talons are retractable and very sharp. Shadow drakes have no breath weapons.

All shadow drakes have the innate ability to create *darkness* twice per day as per the illusionist spell, except that such *darkness* lasts for 24 hours. They can also create a smaller area of *darkness*, as per the spell except that it lasts only five minutes and is 10' across; this power may be used at will. If cast upon a creature that does not make its saving throw vs. spells, this spell blinds the victim for the spell's duration.

Once a shadow drake has access to an area of magical *darkness* (even self-created), it can enter that *darkness*, wherein it can utilize other innate abilities.

The first ability is to create a *shadow duplicate* of itself. This power is like the illusionist spell *shades*, except that the

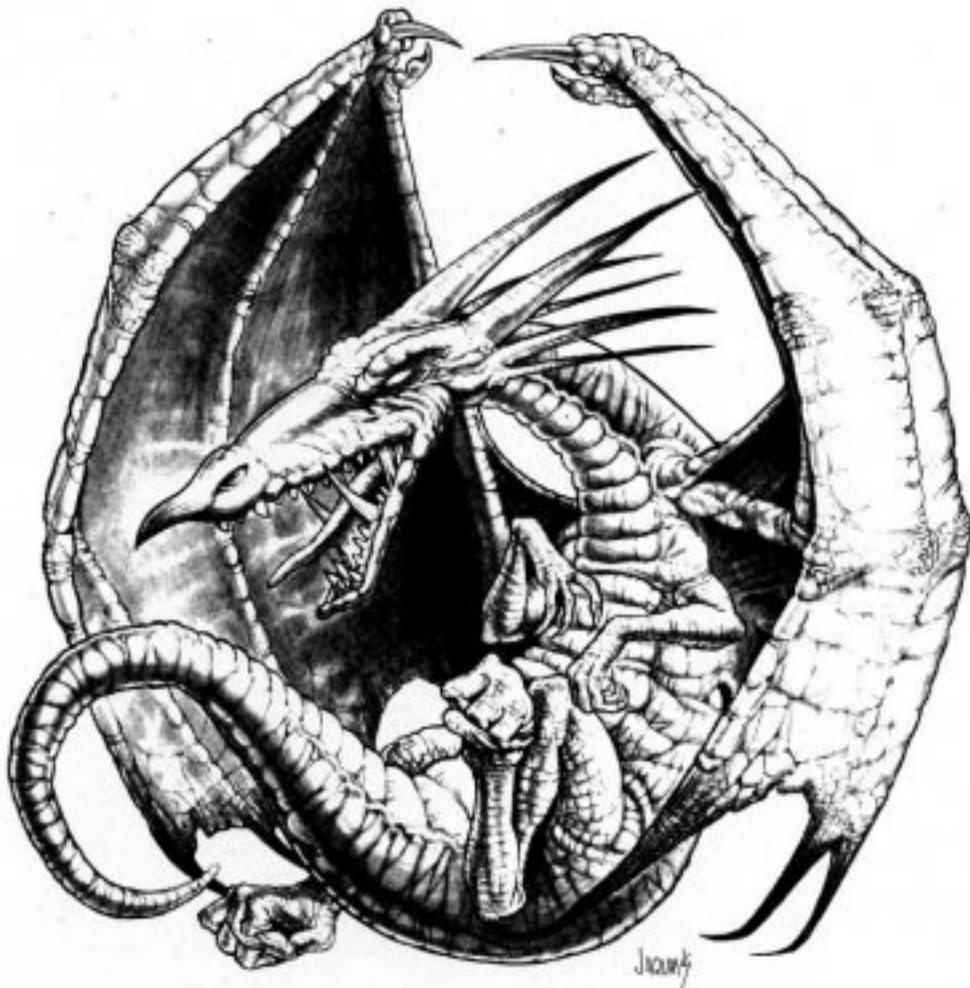
type of *shadow monster* created is an illusionary duplicate of the shadow drake without magical ability. This *shadow duplicate* cannot be told from the original, as per the illusionist spell *mirror image*. This power can be used but once per day.

The second ability is to duplicate the effects of the illusionist spell *demi-shadow monsters*. There are no restrictions to this spell-like ability, and any creature the shadow drake can imagine can be created. This spell is always cleverly used to create a monster to cause the most disruption possible. This power may be used twice per day.

The third ability available to shadow drakes while in magical *darkness* is *rope trick*, as per the illusionist spell. The shadow drake can hide in this extradimensional space for the duration of the spell, even if the magical *darkness* is dispelled. This power can be used twice per day.

The shadow drake is a shy creature and often uses a *shadow duplicate* to lure creatures away from its lair. Some shadow drakes have magical abilities, having

Shadow Drake



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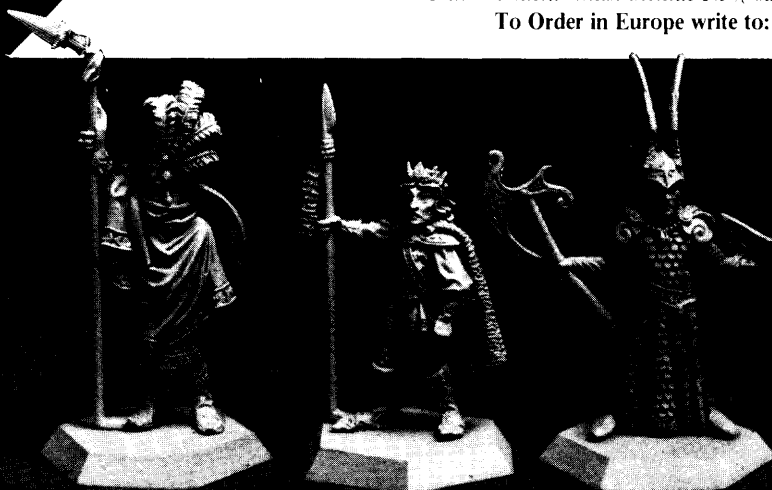
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Table 8
Shadow Drakes' Ages and Spells

Shadow drake age	Hit dice	Size	Magic resistance	Illusionist spells (levels)				
				Cantrips	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Very young	2	6"	10%	0	0	0	0	0
Young	3	1'	15%	1	0	0	0	0
Sub-adult	3+3	1'6"	20%	3	1	0	0	0
Young adult	4	1'9"	25%	4	2	0	0	0
Adult	4+3	2'	30%	4	2	1	0	0
Old	5	2'3"	35%	4	3	2	0	0
Very old	5+2	2'6"	40%	4	4	3	1	0
Ancient	5+4	2'9"	50%	5	4	4	2	1

learned to cast illusionist spells from elder members of their species (though some learn spells from gnome or human illusionists in the vicinity). These spells are mostly defensive in nature but never include spells such as color spray, dancing lights, and other spells that create or involve light. See Table 8 for details.

Shadow drakes love beautiful jewels and

go to any length to secure them. They eat fruits and honey but often supplement their diets with small rodents and insects. Shadow drakes look like small dragons of an ash-gray color. While shy, they are also very curious and have been known to form temporary relationships with gnome, elfen, and human spell-casters. They are particularly fond of illusionists.

Ancient shadow drakes gain the power to shift to the Astral plane and back once per month. They can take no other shadow drakes with them. Shadow drakes of very old and ancient ages are known to have one further power, that of being able to *dimension door* from one area of magical shadow to another within a one-mile radius.

Ω



The Dragon's Bestiary

All dragons, great and small

It is becoming a tradition for us to offer new types of dragons in our anniversary issues (this being the second year we've done it). The following dragons are offered in the format for the AD&D® 1st Edition game. Unless otherwise stated, these dragons share the same size categories, life stages, infravision ranges, breath-weapon damage statistics, abilities to detect hidden or invisible creatures, fear auras, treasure amounts based on age, and saving-throw bonuses that dragons in the Monster Manual have (see pages 29-31). Notes on sleeping dragons, subduing dragons, and so on are also applicable, again unless stated otherwise. These dragons make terrible pets, but they make wonderful opponents.



Illustrations by Tom Baxa

Cobra Dragon

Cobra Dragon

Created by: Randy Johns

FREQUENCY: *Rare*
NO. APPEARING: 1-4
ARMOR CLASS: 1
MOVE: 12"/24" (MC: D)
HIT DICE: 10-12
% IN LAIR: 45%
TREASURE TYPE: B, R
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws, 1 bite, and 1 tail strike
DAMAGE/ATTACK: See Table 1
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Major breath weapon, poisonous bite, exceptional damage from bite, four attacks per round, to-hit bonus with age, smoke cloud
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Magic resistance, immune to fire, high intelligence, detects hidden/invisible beings, fear aura, saving-throw bonus with age
MAGIC RESISTANCE: See Table 1
INTELLIGENCE: *High*
ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*
SIZE: See Table 1
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 95%

Magic Use: Nil

Sleeping: 35%

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 10 HD: IX/6,900 + 14
per hit point; 11-12 HD: X/10,000 + 16
per hit point

A cobra dragon is gloss black, with an orange underbelly. On either side of its neck is a large hood of skin that resembles that of a king cobra. Legend holds that certain king cobras of great age transform into cobra dragons. Evil reptiles of the Orient, these monsters rival western dragons in greed and aggressiveness.

Cobra dragons do not use magic; in fact, they are highly resistant to it. Instead, they rely on their natural abilities to destroy their enemies.

A cobra dragon attacks by slashing with its claws and whipping with its tail. Due to great strength and skill, a cobra dragon gains a bonus to hit per age category (see Table 1). From the dragon's mouth extend two 13" fangs that inject a deadly venom. A victim bitten by the dragon immediately becomes weak (reduce strength score by half) and dizzy (-3 on all to-hit rolls), and suffers frequent periods of nausea (+4 bonus to be hit by opponents). Every round thereafter, the victim suffers 1 hp damage from extensive bleeding under the skin. All of these effects continue for 10 rounds; at this time, if the individual is successful in making a saving throw vs. poison, he returns to his normal level of function. A failed saving throw indicates the victim falls into shock. When in shock, the victim is unconscious, pale, and covered in sweat. Unless the individual is magically cured of the poison within the next five rounds, the victim dies. Those bitten by a cobra dragon cannot ingest solids or liquids (due to nausea) until the effects of the poison have subsided.

Three times per day, a cobra dragon can breathe a cone of fire 90' long with a 30' base diameter. Optionally, the dragon can breathe its breath weapon directly under its body. The force of the fiery breath striking the ground forms a 40'-diameter circle of flame (similar in nature to a *wall of fire* spell) that surrounds the dragon, burning all within its area of effect. This tactic is quite effective when the cobra dragon is surrounded by multiple opponents. Cobra dragons are not affected by their own breath weapons, as well as all other fire- and heat-based attacks, magical or mundane, but take +2 hp/HD of cold damage. Other elemental attacks (based on water, air, or earth) affect them normally.

When the dragon's fire breath is expelled, a stationary, black smoke cloud is released from its nostrils in a 90'-diameter circle around the dragon. All those within the cloud (except the dragon) suffer from coughing, nausea, and irritated eyes, resulting in a -2 to hit for as long as the

Table 1
Cobra Dragon Age Categories

Age category	Length	Magic resistance	Hit bonus	Damage by claws/bite/tail
Very young	6'	15%	-	1-4/1-10/1-2
Young	15'	30%	+1	1-6/1-10/1-4
Subadult	29'	45%	+2	2-8/2-20/1-6
Young adult	37'	60%	+2	2-12/3-30/2-8
Adult	40'	65%	+3	2-16/3-10/2-12
Old	41'	70%	+3	2-16/3-30/2-12
Very old	42'	75%	+4	2-16/3-30/2-12
Ancient	43'	80%		2-16/3-30/2-12

opponents remain within the cloud. The smoke cloud lasts 4-16 rounds before breaking up. Strong winds move the smoke cloud but do not aid in dispersing it. Effects from several smoke clouds are cumulative. Thus, two clouds released in the same area would result in a -4 to hit; three clouds would result in -6 to hit.

Cobra dragons live in caves and underground caverns in tropical and subtropical environments. They dislike swamps. In Kara-Tur (the *Oriental Adventures* lands of the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ setting), cobra dragons are found in the far southern reaches of the T'u Lung Empire, where they cause considerable grief and destruction. They are said to be even more numerous in other lands south and west of that empire.

Like other dragons, a cobra dragon lays claim to an area of land surrounding its lair, ferociously driving off all other creatures. Intrusion by another cobra dragon is only tolerated during the spring mating season. The mating ritual involves the male and female entering noninjurious combat that results in a fiery display. Mating only occurs during age categories four and five. Cobra dragons past the adult stage of life boast of having outgrown the mating drive. After mating, the female lays 1-4 12"-long eggs. When hatched, the newborn dragons remain with the female until they reach sub-adulthood.

Skull collecting is a favorite pastime of cobra dragons. Skulls of powerful monsters and rare creatures are highly prized. Favorite skulls include those of cave bears, dinosaurs, dragons, giants, and unicorns. Humanoid skulls are deemed interesting but of little value since they are so easily obtained. The offering of a rare skull as a gift when attempting to converse with a cobra dragon aids considerably in gaining the dragon's favor.

Due to its charisma, power, and cunning, a cobra dragon of adult age and beyond attracts a small number of intelligent creatures who search for a leader to serve. Common followers include bake-mono, gargoyles, lizard men, and mobats. These creatures live with the dragon and



Obsidian Dragon

worship it as a god. A cobra dragon of adult age or older has a 60% chance of having 2-8 such allies, chosen by the DM and heavily equipped for combat (if such is possible).

Obsidian Dragon

Created by: Mark Mathis

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
NO. APPEARING: 1-2
ARMOR CLASS: -2
MOVE: 12"/30" (MC: B)
HIT DICE: 13-15
% IN LAIR: 65%

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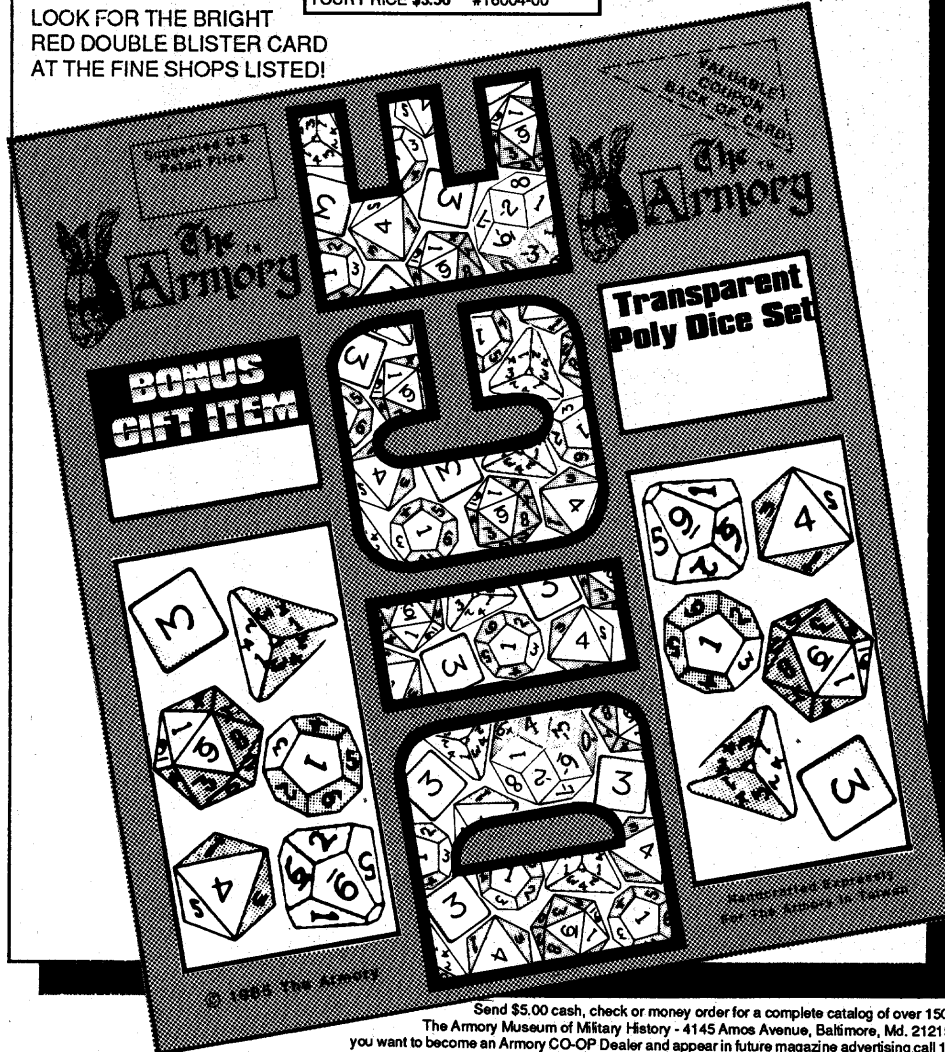
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TREASURE TYPE: *H, R, U (X2)*
 NO. OF ATTACKS: *2 claws, 1 bite, and 1 tail strike*
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *2-8/2-8/6-48/2-16*
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Major breath weapons, exceptional damage from bite, four attacks per round, major spell use*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Magic resistance, high intelligence, detects hidden/invisible objects, fear aura, saving-throw bonus with age, polymorph self at will, low armor class*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *5%*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*
 ALIGNMENT: *Any lawful*
 SIZE: *L (56' long)*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
 CHANCE OF:
 Speaking: *75%*
 Magic Use: *85%*
 Sleeping: *15%*
 LEVEL/XP VALUE: *13-14 HD: X/13,250 + 18 per hit point; 15 HD: X/17,550 + 20 per hit point*

Obsidian dragons appear in most respects to be like silver dragons. The main difference between the two is that obsidian dragons are black with silver highlights. Known only from the northern reaches of the continent of Oerik (in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting), obsidian dragons are thought to be distant but more powerful cousins of silver dragons, originating (some speculate) in the Land of Black Ice. All obsidian dragons are lawful. Some 65% are of good alignment, while 25% are neutral and 10% are evil. As with silver dragons, these creatures are able to *polymorph* themselves at will in order to appear to be a human or normal animal.

The obsidian dragon's tail attack only affects those targets within 20' of the tail itself. The breath weapon of the obsidian dragon is a cone of black acidic frost, 90' long with a 30' base. Creatures who fail their saving throws vs. dragon breath take the usual damage from cold, equal to the dragon's hit points, but they must save again at -2 to avoid taking 2-16 hp acid damage as well (no acid damage is taken if this second save is made). This breath weapon can be used three times per day.

Three times per day, the obsidian dragon can also breathe forth a membranous web of black ice 10' in diameter, shot up to 60' away. Those failing a saving throw vs. dragon breath are enveloped in the web and encased in 5-8" of black ice by the end of that round. All encased creatures are held immobile and must make a second saving throw vs. breath weapon to keep their faces from being covered. Otherwise, they will suffocate in 2-5 rounds unless they can make their bend bars/lift gates strength rolls to break free, or unless the black-ice web suffers at least 12 hp damage (attack vs. AC 4). One-quarter of the damage done to the black-ice web is instead inflicted on the victim so encased.

While very young, obsidian dragons are able to cast three first-level spells. At each age thereafter, they gain three more spells of one higher spell level, plus one spell from each lower spell level. Thus, an ancient dragon could cast 10 first-level spells, nine second-level spells, eight third-level spells, etc. Ancient dragons have a 25% chance of knowing one ninth-level spell. Furthermore, 45% of magic-using obsidian dragons have spell books, so they may select spells for use rather than knowing only a limited number of spells per level.

Obsidian dragons take -1 hp/HD of cold damage inflicted upon them. They are not immune to their own breath weapons. In addition, they take +1 hp/HD of heat-, fire-, and electricity-based attacks.

Gray Dragon

Created by: Gregory Detwiler

FREQUENCY *Rare*
 NO. APPEARING: *1 (15% of 2)*
 ARMOR CLASS: *2*
 MOVE: *12"/30" (MC: E)*
 HIT DICE: *5-7*
 % IN LAIR: *20%*
 TREASURE TYPE: *E, 0*
 NO. OF ATTACKS: *2 claws and 1 bite*
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-4/1-4/2-16*
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Major breath weapon, spell use*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *High intelligence, detects hidden/invisible beings, fear aura, saving-throw bonus with age*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Very*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral evil*
 SIZE: *L (24' long)*
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*
 CHANCE OF:
 Speaking: *50%*
 Magic Use: *40%*
 Sleeping: *35%*
 LEVEL/XP VALUE: *5 HD: V/360 + 5 per hit point; 6-7 HD: VI/625 + 6 per hit point*

Sometimes seen along the coasts of the Ice Wall Glacier, the great southern polar cap of Krynn (the DRAGONLANCE® world), the gray dragon vies with the white dragon for being the smallest and swiftest of all evil dragonkind. The gray dragon, however, is more intelligent than the white dragon, and its thicker scales give it better protection. This intelligence is shown by the gray dragon's greater mastery of magic. Gray dragons gain a first-level spell at each of the first two stages of life, and a second-level spell at the next two stages. At the adult and old stages, they acquire one third-level spell for each stage, and one fourth-level spell each at very old and ancient ages.

Although a gray dragon can attack with a claw/claw/bite routine like nearly all other dragons, its main weapon of choice is a *paralyzing* breath weapon of cold air

Gray Dragon



that may be employed three times per day. This breath weapon comes out of the dragon's mouth in a cone, with a base diameter of 2', a length of 70', and an end diameter of 50'. When the dragon is airborne, this power can bring about the death of a flying opponent. Gray dragons have been observed on a number of occasions using this weapon against masses of migrating birds, particularly waterfowl.

Because of their greater intelligence, gray dragons recognize the importance of immobilizing the opposition. They often attack sled dogs or draft animals first when assaulting a caravan or other large group of traveling people. The craftiest dragons have even been known to make sneak attacks at night, staying only long enough to steal the dog sleds, forcing the travelers to go to the dragon's well-defended lair to retrieve them. This, of course, enables the beast to spend a pleasant time elegantly picking the interlopers off one or a few at a time. Gray dragons old enough to know fourth-level spells favor *dig*, as it enables them to create pitfalls for intruders without too much work. They also favor creating a *phantasmal force* illusion of the stolen dog sleds or other booty in order to tempt intruders into a booby-trapped area without risking the loss of the real prizes.

Gray dragons are not known to have

joined the forces of the Queen of Darkness during the War of the Lance. Instead, they raid and kill any creatures that wander into their territories, be they thanoi, human barbarians, or even white dragons and their riders from the White Dragon-armies. This trait has not endeared them to any being, and careless gray dragons may find themselves hunted by forces of both evil and good at the same time.

Gray dragons take +1 hp/HD of damage from attacks based on fire and electricity, but take -1 hp/HD damage from attacks based on earth and water.

Rainbow Dragon

Created by: Gregory Detwiler

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1 (5% of 2)

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 9"/24" (MC: E)

HIT DICE: 10-12

% IN LAIR: 60%

TREASURE TYPE: H, S, T, U

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2 claws and 1 bite

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-B/1-8/3-30

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Major breath weapon, exceptional damage from bite, night blinding, spell use

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Sun dazzle, low armor class, high intelligence, detect invisible/hidden beings, saving-throw bonus with age

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard

INTELLIGENCE: Exceptional

ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil

SIZE: L (50' long)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 100%

Magic Use: 100%

Sleeping: 20%

LEVEL/XP VALUE: 10 HD: IX/6,750 + 14

per hit point; 11-12 HD: IX/8,050 per hit point

The rainbow dragon is one of the most powerful of all evil-dragons. It is also the most beautiful, its hide displaying an ever-changing display of iridescent hues of all colors. When the dragon is in bright desert light, this dazzling play of colors gleams so brightly that it is painful to the eyes, causing any attackers to attack at -2 to hit, or -4 in addition to penalties for fighting in the light if the attackers (like orcs or drow) are not accustomed to direct sunlight.

The rainbow dragon usually fights with a claw/claw/bite routine. Five times per day, it can use its breath weapon of pure energy, which looks like a rainbow-hued blast of light. This weapon does damage equal to the dragon's hit points, but affects only one target per attack. The breath weapon is a 5'-wide beam of energy that extends for 100'. So bright is this light that if the dragon attacks at night, everyone within 100' of the beam must save vs. spells or be blinded for 1-4 rounds.

In addition to this, all rainbow dragons are capable of spell use. Very young and young stages of growth allow the rainbow dragon to acquire one first-level spell at each stage; at subadult and young-adult stages each, it may acquire a second-level spell. A third-level spell is gained at both the adult and old stages, and a fourth-level spell at both the very old and ancient stages. All rainbow dragons can speak and enjoy negotiating for ever-larger tributes and payoffs from cities that wish to keep such dragons from attacking them.

Rainbow dragons aggressively patrol their territories (especially in daytime) and prefer to attack when the sun is out so as to take advantage of their light-enhancing defenses. Rainbow dragons prefer brightly lit desert and plains regions, making their lairs in old ruins or caverns.

The blood of these beasts can be used as ingredients in scroll ink for the spells *color spray*, *prismatic sphere*, *prismatic spray*,

and *prismatic wall*. A bit of bone from a rainbow dragon is said to tip the best *wands of conjuration*.

Attacks based on elemental sources (earth, air, fire, and water) affect the rainbow dragon normally. Electrical attacks are taken with a -1 hp/HD penalty to damage, which is helpful if the rainbow dragon fights a blue dragon for the same territory.

Draken

Created by: Malcolm Bowers

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-6

ARMOR CLASS: 3

MOVE: 9"/12" (MC: C)

HIT DICE: 3 +6

% IN LAIR: 55%

TREASURE TYPE: *Incidental*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3 bites

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-6/1-6

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breath weapon, shocking bite*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Immune to sleep and electrical attacks*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

INTELLIGENCE: *Low*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful evil*

SIZE: S (4' long)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: 10%

Magic Use: Nil

Sleeping: 40%

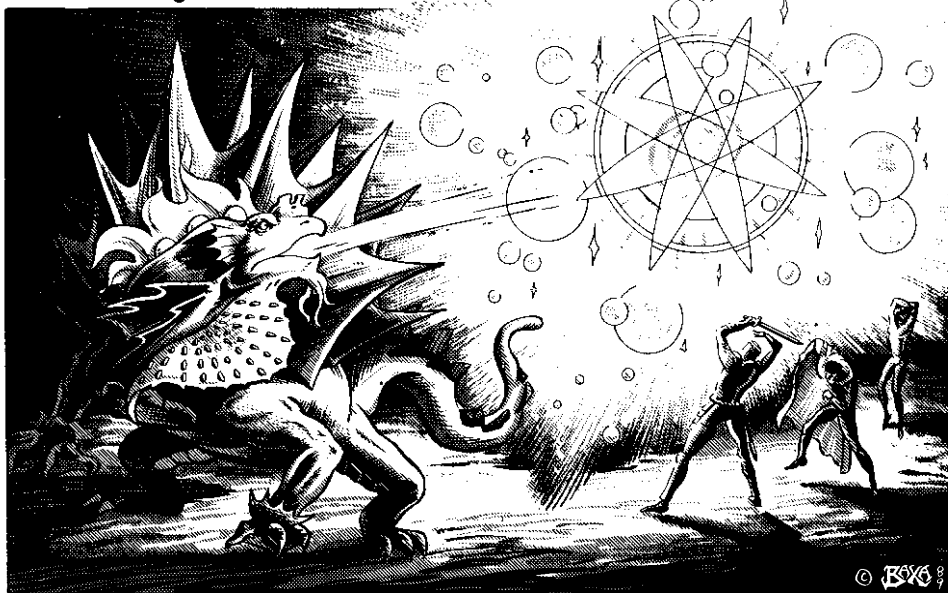
LEVEL/XP VALUE: IV/175 + 4 per hit point

A draken resembles a small, three-headed blue dragon in appearance, except that its coloration is much darker (nearly Prussian blue) and its wings and eyes are tinged cyan. The draken is a dragonet, cousin to both the firedrake and ice lizard, and distantly related to blue dragons in the same way that firedrakes and ice lizards are to red and white dragons. It inhabits the vast Calim Desert of Calimshan (in the FORGOTTEN REALMS setting), where it is renowned for its irascibility.

Its primary attack form is a breath weapon, which each head can use twice daily; this is a bolt of lightning 1' wide and 60' long that delivers 2-16 hp damage (or half that if a victim makes his saving throw vs. breath weapons).

Drakens do not use their claws in combat, but each head can bite in the same round (and at the same or different targets). If two bites are successful, a *shocking grasp* effect does 4-11 hp damage to the victim; if all three bite attacks hit, the extra damage is 9-17 hp damage. The draken may use any combination of bites and breath weapons from its three heads in a round; a breath need not be at the same target as bite attacks. The draken is immune to *sleep* spells and to all electrical

Rainbow Dragon



attacks. If it is sprayed with water, it cannot generate its breath weapon for 2-5 rounds. It takes + 2 hp damage per hit die of fire- or heat-based attacks.

Drakens lack the size and age categories of their larger kin, growing to adulthood within a year's time after being hatched (given sufficient food). They also lack the larger dragons' sensory powers, *fear* aura, and saving-throw bonuses—but they cannot be subdued, either.

Minidragon

Created by: David E. Cates

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1-2

ARMOR CLASS: 5 (2 in flight)

MOVE: 6"/28" (MC: A)

HIT DICE: *See Table 2*

% IN LAIR: 33%

TREASURE TYPE: *Incidental (usually J-N, Qx5)*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 bite

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See Table 2*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Poisonous and corrosive spit, surprise 1-5 on 1d6*

SPECIAL DEFENSES:

*Magic resistance,
minor spell immunities,
multiple saving-
throw bonuses*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 35%

INTELLIGENCE: *Semi-
(low when empathi-
cally bound)*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

SIZE: *S (See Table 2)*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil, but
immune to attack*

CHANCE OF:

Speaking: *See below*

Magic Use: *Nil*

Sleeping: *10%*

LEVEL/XP VALUE: *Up to V/400
+ 5 per hit point*

These strange creatures look like winged snakes, and they are distant cousins to faerie dragons. They usually live in or near wilderness swamp areas, making their homes in the trunks of giant trees.

They freely associate with black dragons, who accept minidragons outside their lairs. Minidragons are dull green, while their underbellies are orange or scarlet. Their wings are patterned in alternating stripes of green and orange or green and scarlet. Rarer minidragons have bluish or yellowish tinges. There are no obvious differences between males and females.

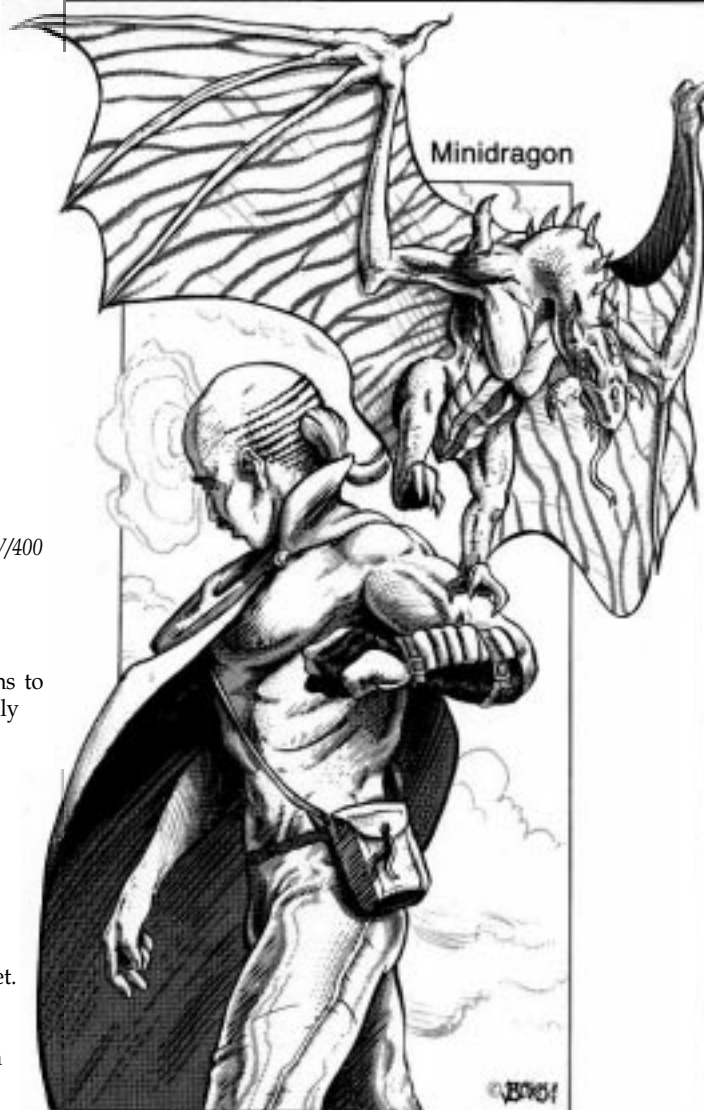
Four times per day, a minidragon of adult age or older is capable of spitting a nerve toxin that can be used to disable or slay its enemies. The minidragon must make a to-hit roll with its venom in order to affect the target.

This toxic spit has a 60' range, with - 2 and - 5 to-hit modifiers for medium (21-40') and long (41-60') ranges..

If the poison hits, two saving throws must be made against its effects. The first saving throw is against the effects of the nerve toxin. If the victim fails his saving throw vs. poison, he takes 1-4 hp damage per round for 3-6 rounds until death or until the poison is magically neutralized. Furthermore, the intense pain of the toxin causes the victim to take a -4 modifier on to-hit rolls, armor class, and saving throws for the first 1-4 rounds.

The second saving throw is made for the victim's armor, against a corrosive substance found in the venom. If the armor fails a save vs. acid (see the 1st Edition DMG, page 80), it loses one step of armor-class protection permanently. Magical armors lose their enchantments if this save is failed as well.

A *neutralize poison* spell neutralizes the



nerve toxin but has no effect on the damage already done by it. Nor will this spell have any effect upon the damage done by the corrosive nature of the venom.

Minidragons have a permanent sense of *empathy*, as per the psionic discipline, that functions in a 20' radius. This power gives them +4 to all their saving throws if attacked by creatures within this range, since they are able to instantly take evasive actions and dart for cover. Because of their unique constitution, minidragons receive an additional + 4 bonus to their poison and acid saving throws. All minidragons have an innate magic resistance of 35% and are immune to *charm* and *summon monster* spells.

Left alone, the minidragon is fairly even-tempered and will not usually attack humans unless angered or its lair is disturbed. Even then, the minidragon will usually sense if the intrusion is willful or not. If it senses the intrusion is an accident, the minidragon tries to warn off the intruder. If the minidragon senses that it is being hunted, it can be very cunning, as its empathic ability allows it to evade capture often. The minidragon's swift, darting movements while flying give it a better armor class. When its colorful wings are



Draken

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Table 2
Minidragon Age Categories

Age category	Hit dice	Bite damage	Length
Very young	1	1-2	6"
Young	2	1-3	1'
Subadult	3	1-4	1'6"
Adult	3+2	1-4	2'
Old	4	2-5	2'3"
Very old	4+2	2-5	2'6"
Ancient	5	1-4	3'

folded to its body, and it is in natural surroundings, the minidragon blends in with these surroundings so well that it surprises on 1-5 on 1d6.

In very rare instances, minidragons form an empathic bond with a friendly human or demihuman. The chance of this occurring equals the charisma score of the human or demihuman, expressed as a percentage chance that is rolled when the minidragon and character meet. If this roll fails, it cannot be rolled again for that one character. If it succeeds, the minidragon stays with the character and gains one point of intelligence every month for 1-4 months. The minidragon learns to speak the character's preferred language in 3-6 months. This increase in abilities is lost

if the character and the minidragon are separated by over 20' for longer than a month. The maximum intelligence score for a bonded minidragon is seven.

Minidragons have the age categories of major dragons, but lack the size categories, sensory powers, fear auras, and saving-throw bonuses. They cannot be subdued.

Though minidragons have 60' infravision, they are not usually nocturnal. When trying to frighten or warn off a creature, they are capable of emitting a very loud and piercing hiss. Minidragons are also able to spit harmless spittle at an opponent, perhaps for the purpose of frightening it.

Minidragons have a simple language that is based upon the language that black dragons speak. Minidragons prize shiny objects such as pieces of glass, coins, or jewels. Minidragons are capable of hovering in one place. These drakes usually eat insects, rodents, berries, tubers, and nuts, but are quite capable of downing larger creatures for food, if necessary. Minidragons are fond of salt and often react to it as a cat does to catnip.

Ω



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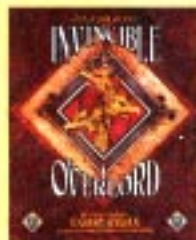
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by Jean Rabe and Skip Williams

The New Ecology of the Dragons

They're back—and more dangerous than ever!

The inn stood at a crossroads. It fronted on a broad track whose sturdy pavement, carefully laid by hands long since turned to dust, was beginning to surrender to too many years of wear, frost, and invasions from the surrounding forest. A narrow, muddy logging track crossed the road nearby, and a thin stripe of clay and forest debris marked the pavement where the loggers and other two-legged denizens of the forest traveled.

As dusk began to creep over the trees, a ragged foursome trudged up the trail and paused to stare gratefully at the inn. They had the frayed and gritty look of men and women who made their livings by spell and sword. This group was more frayed than most. Under the trail dirt, their tunics and cloaks were mottled with pale splotches where the color had been burned away. Their armor and metal accouterments were tarnished and pitted; whatever had scarred their metal had also left their faces scaly and blistered.

The group was loaded with sacks and bundles. The patrons at the roadside inn had seen their share of rogues, vagabonds, and sell-swords burdened with loot. Overstrained leather bags crammed with who-knew-what were common enough, and even the limp, shrouded form of a carefully wrapped corpse was not out of the ordinary for a group such as this—and indeed, such a burden was among those the group carried. A thin man with a pale scholar's complexion staggered as he bore the wrapped body. A tall fighter followed close behind, toting a pair of oblong bundles over his broad shoulders. The hidden

items had been wrapped in blankets and carefully tied. Flies swarmed around the bundles' drooping ends, where the blankets were bloodsoaked and stiff. Two other armor-clad and pack-laden figures, a man and a woman, completed the group.

The innkeeper scrutinized the group and their burdens from a window, bolted to the doorway, and planted himself on the threshold. Wringing his hands on his apron, he forced himself to smile broadly. "Greetings, milady and gentlemen. Welcome to the Crossroads Inn!" His smile weakened as the group drew nearer and he caught scent of them. "Nobb! Hartcourt!" he screeched over his shoulder. "You lazybones, come help these good people with their packages." Rebuilding his smile with an effort, he turned to the newcomers. "You've obviously come a long way and must be very tired. In two shakes, we'll have your bundles safely put away in the stable. No need to carry them any farther." He fervently hoped there wouldn't be trouble. Some of the patrons inside moved to tables closer to the door, secretly hoping there would be.

There was a brief argument when the foursome refused to give up their bundles and dead comrade. In the end, the innkeeper agreed to tuck the body away in a private room upstairs, and the party reluctantly allowed the bundles to be carried to the stables and stored there under Nobb's watchful eye—once Nobb understood the penalty for disturbing the bundles himself.

The group strode purposefully into the inn to see a dozen patrons at tables near the door, all pretending not to notice the

newcomers. A young woman and an elderly man who were finishing dinner at the bar nodded a greeting. The newcomers selected a cluttered table near the fire. Out of habit, they turned their backs to the fire and sat so they could watch the windows and door—and the other patrons.

"Now, what can I get for you?" the innkeeper queried.

"Wine for four, and silence," the fighter replied.

The innkeeper retreated. The tall fighter's eyes swept the room again, chasing away the inquisitive gaze of the bar's patrons. The old man and young woman smiled benignly, even compassionately, when he glanced at them. Definitely not locals, the fighter thought; they made a handsome couple—father and daughter, perhaps. The fighter immediately decided he liked them. A nudge and a nod from the fighter's scholarly companion drew his attention to the only other obvious traveler in the room: a tall, weather-beaten man sitting alone at a corner table. Although his face was hidden by a hood, the fighter could feel the stranger's eyes boring into him. Now it was his turn to look away.

"Shall we strangers all sit together?" The young woman had arisen and now approached the adventurers' table with the old man in tow. "It would better accommodate the locals. They won't have to strain their necks looking from place to place."

The fighter acquiesced, gesturing to two empty chairs. The innkeeper brought the



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wine and glasses, then retreated but stayed within earshot.

"I'm Jonnel," the fighter said. He pointed to his thin friend. "This is Tehm, and this is Katarine of Sune," he continued, indicating the plain-looking woman in chain mail, who was favoring her right arm. "Over there is my brother, Jubal." The other fighter coolly regarded the man and woman, then resumed watching the other patrons and the stranger in the corner. "Melody's upstairs. . . indisposed. Temporarily, we hope." Tehm glared at Jonnel, then lost himself in a glass of wine. Jonnel did not seem bothered.

The pair sat. "I'm Hypatia," said the woman, "and my good companion is Sterling. We're from the mountains north of here. By the look of you, you've got quite a story to tell. Tell us about it, won't you?"

Another silence fell over the room. The party members exchanged glances briefly. Katarine rolled her eyes. Jonnel glanced around the table, but no one made an effort to speak. Still, custom was custom; an invitation to a tale was not to be refused. Reluctantly, he took a deep breath and cleared his throat. Best to skip over the last few weeks and just pick up with yesterday. "As fortune had it," he began, "we found ourselves in the woods but a day's march from here with the, um, fruits of our recent labors. The woods had been quiet for several days, and we were edgy."

"We were at each others' throats about it, you mean," Katarine said quietly. "We knew something was wrong, but we had no idea what. We were having an argument when it came upon us. It must have been following us."

"It was a dragon," Jonnel clarified, warming to the tale. "It was immense, ninety feet from nose to tail, if an inch. It had a neck like a tree trunk. I turned when it came on, and all I could see were its teeth, like scimitars." There were gasps from the patrons at the magical word "dragon." The stranger in the corner leaned forward and cupped his chin in his hand, saying nothing at all. Hypatia and Sterling waited expectantly.

"It was damned clever," Jonnel said. "We didn't know what it was at first. We were breaking camp one morning with the usual grumbling about who was going to carry what, when we heard a deep, rumbling voice like thunder. It said something like, 'I'll take care of your belongings. In exchange, I'll let you live.'"

"We were hardly in the mood for talk," Tehm said into his wineglass. "And we weren't about to hand our belongings over to something hidden in the trees. Would that we had known better."

"I prepared a hold person spell, and Jonnel and Jubal drew steel," Katarine added. "Then the dragon showed itself, rising up and snapping a tree beneath its weight. It was barely a dagger's throw from us. We'd never even heard it."

"It was a green dragon, wasn't it?" Ster-

"Then the dragon showed itself, rising up and snapping a tree beneath its weight. It was barely a dagger's throw from us. We'd never even heard it."

ling interrupted. "There's been word of one in this region for years, a greedy bully with a dark splash beneath one eye."

"That it was, the same one," Jubal replied, surprised. "We immediately covered our faces and stopped breathing, to save ourselves from its breath."

"And little help it was, too," Jonnel said. "It laughed and blew a cloud at us, thick green stuff that writhed as if it were solid. When it touched us, it stuck; the gas coated our armor and corroded it." He indicated his once-fine chain mail. "The gas seeped into our skins, and we became feverish and nauseated. It burned our eyes, making it difficult to see. When it got in our throats, we could barely talk. By some miracle, we all survived that first onslaught."

Tehm set his glass on the table but didn't look up. "Before we could act, the thing leapt into the air. For all its size, it was as graceful as a hawk. Beating its great wings to stay aloft, it demanded that we lay down our wealth, or it would breathe again. This time, we complied. We put our bags and backpacks in the clearing and backed away, seeking shelter in the foliage. Still, we did not want to lose our wealth, foolishly valuing it more than our lives. We circled the beast as it descended to inspect what we'd left. Katarine and I prepared spells; Jonnel and Jubal readied their weapons; and dear Melody climbed a tree to gain the best angle for her bow—she trusted luck and her skill."

Tehm's voice became inflectionless and distant. "The dragon was so engrossed in its gains that it wasn't paying attention to us. Melody planted an arrow deep in the dragon's side, and we gave it all we had. My magic missiles caused it to shriek in pain before Katarine magically silenced the beast so it would not be able to cast spells.² Jonnel and Jubal tried to close with it, but the thing arose from the forest floor; I was amazed that something so large could move so fast. I thought it was going to fly straight up so it could breathe on us again. Instead, it flew to the tree that Melody was in, snatched her from the branches with one great claw, and carried her aloft. In a moment, it was above the trees. . . ." He stopped, looking into the distance. When he spoke again, his voice was barely audible. "I ran into the clearing, trying to get it to come back."³

Jonnel laid a blistered but steady hand over the mage's trembling fist. "We all went a little crazy then," he said. "It sped away from us for a few moments, climbing higher and higher. As we watched, the

dragon slowed and turned.⁴ And soon it was back over the clearing; it looked like a bird, it was so far away. We scattered, spreading out so its breath weapon wouldn't catch us all. We watched from hiding, waiting for anything but what happened next." The fighter's voice faded now, too. "The dragon dropped Melody. She landed in the center of the clearing. Then the dragon flew away."

"We rushed out to her, Tehm and I," Katarine said after a pause. "It was no use. She was beyond aid. Jonnel and Jubal began to gather our possessions while keeping an eye out for the dragon. We picked Melody up and started to carry her to the cover of the trees when we heard Jonnel yell. The dragon was back; we hadn't thought it would return so quickly."⁵

Jonnel picked up the story. "I hollered a warning as the dragon plummeted to the clearing, landing on top of Katarine, Tehm, and Melody." Then it got up, turned toward us, and breathed again. We survived the attack and charged forward. We knew it could not breathe again so soon. We then charged—"

The stranger in the corner snorted, a big puff of smoke rising from his pipe. "Some fools say dragons must rest each time they breathe their poisons before unleashing another breath. But this is only what the survivors have reported. Those who failed to survive might have told a different story—that dragons can breathe more quickly than anyone would suppose."⁷

There was a brittle silence. The adventurers stared at the stranger as they fingered their wineglasses.

"At any rate," continued Jubal, "we knew it had but one more breath left within it, so it could not—"

"And some fools," the stranger snorted

**"It flew to the tree
that Melody was in, snatched
her from the branches
with one great claw, and
carried her aloft."**

again, his head wreathed in a gray-blue ring of pipe smoke, "think dragons can breathe only three times a day."

The stares that were given this time were long and cold.

"There is truth to what he says." Every-

one turned to Hypatia. "It sometimes happens that dragons can breathe again more quickly than their opponents believe possible. I have seen it happen. And some can, by resting, restore their breath weapons again in less than a day's time."

"In any event," Jubal said at last, "we charged the dragon, drawing it away from our two living comrades, who only had the wind knocked from them to go with their bruises. I decided to meet the dragon head on, while Jonnel went for its side. We figured this tactic would keep one of us safe from its bite. But the dragon lashed out with a wing, sending Jonnel spinning. I rushed to his aid without thinking, and I could almost feel the fiend's teeth as they snapped at my back. But Jonnel regained his footing unhindered, and we turned back to the fray, taking it from behind as it prepared to chew on our comrades."

The stranger peevishly tapped the ashes from his pipe. "Here comes another lesson in dragon fighting," he muttered.

Jubal's hand dropped to the pommel of his sword.

"Gods!" shouted Tehm, slamming down his glass in a spray of wine. His eyes burned as they fixed on the stranger. "Dare you mock us and our grief? Is your life so dull that you find comfort in courting your death?"

The patrons who had hoped for trouble now found they had been too hasty in

their wishes. They now sat with bloodless faces, not even daring to breathe.

"Hardly," returned the stranger, packing his pipe anew. "I've merely had the fortune, good or bad, to have gone on before you. So tell me, valiant fighter," he continued, gesturing to Jubal with his unlit pipe, "did it lash with its tail, or did you just get kicked?"

Tehm scowled silently and gulped the rest of his wine. He reached for the pitcher, but Katarine stopped him.

The color arose in Jubal's cheeks. "It kicked us," he said evenly.

"No insult intended," replied the stranger, "but you were fortunate. A dragon's tail can lash at anyone who isn't standing right at its root. A kick is preferable to that, at least."

"I would not trade for a worse blow than the one it gave us," Jubal said slowly. "I thought I had been struck by a battering ram."

"Your analogy is appropriate," Hypatia said suddenly. "But again, he is correct. A dragon's tail weighs many hundreds of pounds. A single slap from it can kill far more easily than could a kick. A few strokes of a tail, and this inn would be around our ears."⁸

"Forgive me," said the stranger, in a matter-of-fact tone, "but I'll wager that after you were kicked, you fought the dragon and slew it before it could breathe again. You skinned it, wrapped the hide in bundles, then came directly here."

"You are either a seer," said Tehm in a dangerously calm voice, "or you've been spying upon us."

"Not spying at all," replied the stranger. "We saw your friend Jonnel carrying the bundles, stiff with blood. Also, you were loaded with treasure; you admitted as much, and the sad burden you carried was obvious when you came up the road. With such a load as that, I doubt you would have gone anywhere else before you came here. I guessed the dragon did not breathe again because a dragon's foes do not usually survive if it can breathe more than once. Your courage and skill are not at question. You have merely discovered what many others have died learning—that dragons are terrible and versatile foes. I have shown it poorly, but you have my sincere respect. Please forgive my intrusions."

The adventurers seemed only slightly mollified by this, but appeared willing to let the stranger's rudeness drop. Several chairs scraped loudly across the floor as many of the tavern's patrons shoved themselves away from their tables and left the inn. Some were disappointed at the spoiling of the tale. Most were grateful to be alive. The innkeeper's face fell as he watched his customers go. The stranger only smiled. He then spoke a word, a tiny flame appeared on his forefinger, and he relit his pipe.

"I was not surprised to hear that you missed the dragon when it was lying in

wait for you," continued the stranger.

"Green dragons are bred for the forest.

Their color blends in with the foliage well, and they know it the forest as well as most elves. It's their territory, for which—as you saw—they will die defending."

Sterling nodded. "Some will die defending it. The dragon you fought was said to be young, and the battle you describe with it confirms this. I presume it picked the particular clearing you were in for its attack because there were small trees nearby—trees it could snap dramatically to make itself seem much bigger and more terrifying."

"But it was so large!" Tehm exclaimed. "Melody was like a tiny doll in its claws. And you call it young?"

"All dragons are large," Sterling said. "You were just lucky you fought one of the smaller ones. Based on the size of the bundles of skin you carried, and your estimate of its length, I would speculate that the dragon was probably a mere child. It stayed and fought to the end, indicating the foolishness of youth: It valued your treasure more than its life—a misconception that you said once belonged to you and your friends. Older and wiser dragons, although they covet treasure, understand the value of their enormous lifespans. They will flee from risky conflicts to seek less costly struggles later.

"And if you have considered going back to get the young wyrm's treasure," the old man added, "I wouldn't bother. Juvenile dragons usually don't have treasure—they're just starting out on their own. What treasure you carried might have made a nice start for it. On the other hand, the dragon might still have been living with one or both parents, and perhaps had other siblings. If that was the case, tracking it to its lair would only prove fatal for all of you.

"Yes," the stranger said, setting his pipe on the table. "Accept your loss and lick your wounds."

Tehm steepled his fingers and glanced at the stranger, whose face still remained hidden by the cloak. He then turned to the couple. "How is it that you know so much about dragons?"

Sterling laid his left arm on the table and rolled up the sleeve of his robe. "This," he said, as he indicated a long scar, "comes from an encounter with a blue dragon." He rolled the arm over, revealing a deeper, curved scar. "And this is a souvenir from a red dragon. Hypatia and I are . . . multi-talented, and we have a special interest in the doings of the evil serpents."

"How did you cross paths with the blue one?" Katarine queried.

"The tale is too long to tell. Let it suffice to say that a friend of mine had dragon trouble, and my young companion and I went to investigate it. It was in the desert many leagues to the west of here. We were forced to meet the fearsome beast in the open, as it is next to impossible to sneak up on a blue dragon. The tale of the



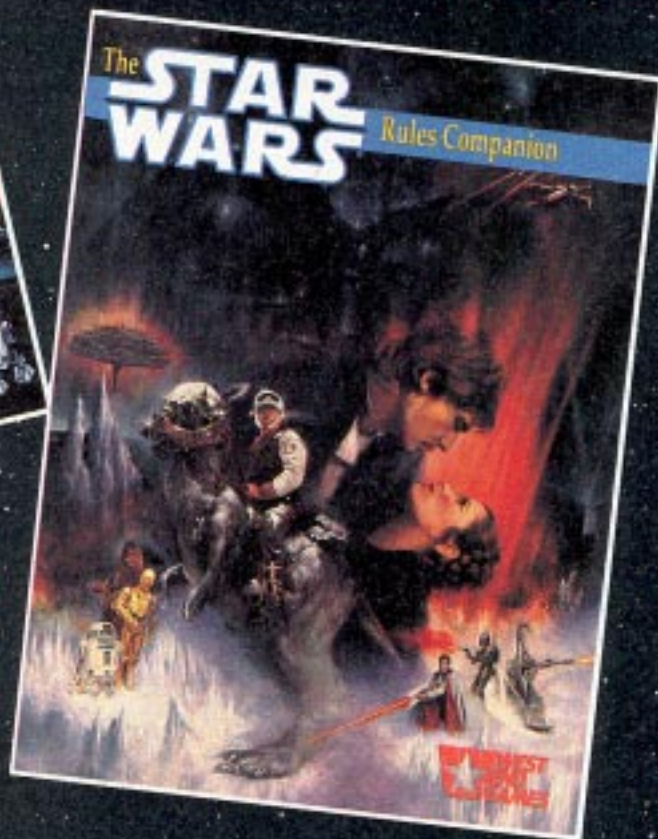
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"You see, blue dragons—indeed, all dragons—leave little indication of their presence, hiding their passage by flying over the land or by manipulating the environment."

battle is irrelevant. We killed it, of course; otherwise we would not be here. Blue dragons are loathe to let anything get away from them."

"Please go on," pressed Katarine. "We would do well to learn more of the tricks involved in dragon slaying."

Hypatia and Sterling exchanged looks that no one could interpret.

"I would like to know more about dragon slaying myself," said the stranger. "Such knowledge could only be of help."

"Really?" the young woman said, turning to look at the stranger. Their eyes locked.

"Of help against evil dragons, of course," the stranger said. "Share with us what you know."

"It's a bagatelle," the old man said, moving his chair so his back was to the stranger. Hypatia didn't move; her eyes bored into the stranger's hood. The stranger returned the gaze and blew a lazy smoke ring, gold in color, that drifted to the adventurers' table. The young woman broke it with an outstretched finger.

The old man scowled in disapproval at his companion. "Anyway," he continued. "blue dragons are masters of ambush. Where green dragons scheme to bring all the creatures of the forest under their dominion, blue dragons seek to trap the unwary. They crave fresh meat and sudden victory. They use the arid deserts where they live to build their traps. Young dragons merely bury themselves in the sand, wait for something to get close enough, and strike as quickly as the lightning they breathe."

"Dragons can dig?" Jubal queried.

"Oh, yes," Sterling replied. "Several kinds of dragons can burrow, but only the young prefer it." Older and craftier blue dragons soar over the desert for hours. When they spot prey, they watch it from a great height, being careful to stay hidden against the blinding sun. When the time is right, usually during the hottest part of the day, they strike. Many travelers have lost their pack animals and supplies to attacks like this. Afterward, the dragon continues to shadow any remaining victims, attacking again and again, sometimes charging from behind a dune in the dark of night, or lying in wait near water. You never know where you'll find the dragon. It could be right in front of you."

The stranger snorted as he puffed on his pipe, but he was smiling.

The young woman's eyes slowly narrowed to slivers as she stared at the stranger. "What do you want from us?" she asked.

"Nothing whatsoever beyond your good will," answered the stranger gallantly, almost cheerfully. "Pray, tell us more."

The old man resumed, "Blue dragons use their environment, and the older ones can manipulate it. Some whip up great winds that cause sandstorms to blind travelers. The oldest of the dragons use illusions to change the appearance of the terrain. I once heard of a blue dragon who would burrow into the sand up to its eyes, then create an illusion of an oasis over it, complete with a glistening pool. As parched, unwary travelers approached, it rose up and breathed its lightning on them. These old dragons can also mask the terrain to cause travelers to lose their way. In some deserts where blue dragons are known to lair, maps are as valuable as water."

"But what about the one you fought? Was it hard to find its lair?" Jonnel asked. "And is its skin worth anything?"

"I would think," Katarine said, "that it would be pretty easy to tell where a dragon travels. All you have to do is follow its tracks and droppings."

Hypatia started to speak, then stopped herself. A blush spread over her face.

Sterling sipped his wine and slowly shook his head. "Taking skins is barbaric—forgive me. But yes, we found its lair, and two younger dragons, which we quickly dispatched. We weren't in the mood to subdue them.¹⁰ The lair was a horrid, evil place—not filled with droppings as most would think. Dragons are incredibly efficient creatures; nearly everything they eat is converted to raw energy. It was located amid grotesque rock formations, and ugly, pale desert fungus clung to the walls. There were small bits of bone and a few polished skulls, probably set about as macabre decoration. We stayed there only a short while, as long as was necessary to gather the gems, jewelry, trinkets, and gold. We left behind the copper, as it was not as valuable as the other items and was too voluminous to carry."

"There was a big collection of marvelous blue sapphires," Hypatia broke in. "There were too many of the exquisite gems for them to have been there by chance. The dragon must have been deliberately collecting them, sending agents to purchase or steal them, or demanding them as tribute. Perhaps all blue dragons covet them because of the similarity to their own color. Evil dragons are such vain and selfish creatures."

The old man continued his tale. "We left the lair and returned home. The lair had been so difficult to find that I am certain no others stumbled upon it. You see, blue dragons—indeed, all dragons—leave little indication of their presence, hiding their

passage by flying over the land or by manipulating the environment. In most deserts, the sands are evershifting, quickly hiding a blue dragon's tracks.

"All dragons' lairs are virtually inaccessible to all but their inhabitants. Red dragons live on lonely mountain tops; black dragons make their lairs in dismal bogs; white dragons choose forbidding, icy wastes."

"But no matter where the lairs are hidden, men will always search them out," said the stranger. "Dragons aren't the only creatures who are greedy and covetous. Every being on two legs looks forward to the day he can come to a place like this, stand tall, and say 'I killed a dragon.' Wealth and glory are powerful lures for any adventurer. Wouldn't you agree?"

The stranger was looking at the adventurers, whose faces hardened as they guessed they were being mocked again.

"Enough is enough," said Hypatia quietly.

The stranger nodded. "Still, on the subject of lairs, there are a few common factors they all share. All dragon lairs are isolated, as dragons like their privacy. Evil dragons look to the wealth they've accumulated for companionship. And as efficient as they are, they are voracious eaters. All natural creatures nearby quickly learn to avoid the dragon's lair; those that don't are just as quickly eaten.

"The area around an evil dragon's lair exists in a state of arrested decay, while a good dragon's abode is surrounded by a country that is both serene and beautiful. The entrances to the lair are always hard to find. The dragon will use all of its natural and magical abilities to hide them, and will use its intelligence and strength to create obstacles within the lair to trap trespassers. A well-concealed dragon's lair cannot be seen until one treads upon the very threshold or wanders blindly into it. And a dragon is so linked to its lair that it can detect the presence of life within it; an older dragon can sense life beyond its lair."

"Too true," said Sterling. "A black dragon lying in its boggy lair can sense lizards scampering by on fallen trees. One such dragon sensed my companions and I paddling our boat through a reedy cypress swamp. When the noon sun beat down, a miasma rose and made it difficult to navigate or even breathe. We noticed a dark, clear spot to our right, where the cypresses, festooned with clinging vines, leaned over the water and formed a shady grotto. We paddled toward the grotto. It was quiet and calm, and without mist. We planned to rest awhile and perhaps fish. However, we had little time even for thinking. Crocodiles from the bank swam at us like a wave of soldiers going into battle. Spells were cast and arrows fired, but the crocodiles continued to close. Had we been less energetic in our defense, I dare say they would have upset the boat, or at least climbed into it. Yet, at the height of the attack, they were gone as suddenly as

they came. We were puzzled, as we did not believe our efforts would drive them away so quickly. We scanned the bank to make sure the crocodiles were not returning—but we were looking in the wrong direction. The boat surged, nearly pitching us into the water. We cast about wildly and found a massive, ink-black head towering above us. For a moment, it simply stared and looked amused. Before we could collect our scattered wits, it spat.”

“Spat?” said Katarine.

“A black dragon’s breath is a gout of caustic acid. This particular dragon’s acid dissolved just about everything it touched. My skin burned horribly. Needless to say, panic ensued. The majority of my companions stiffened with fear, staring at the beast as it raised a great claw and struck the boat, capsizing it and sending us all into the water. The few of us who could took to the air to combat it; the rest were forced to fight the wyrm in its own element. As the unfortunate few floundered in the fetid water, the dragon called back the crocodiles to join in the fray. Those of us in the air hurled missile weapons and spells—with little effect. Because the thing was so old and its hide so thick, normal missiles bounced off and fell into the dank water. Only some of our spells affected it. Mature dragons are resistant to magic, and this specimen’s magic resistance was very powerful. As we continued to fight it, the dragon summoned a swarm of insects that attacked our mage. Next, the venerable beast covered itself in absolute darkness. This caused our party much distress—at least until we dispelled the dweomer. The dragon, of course, was not hindered by the darkness in the least. It fouled our potions, cast spells at us, and dealt our party several fatalities. In the end, the dragon and its servants were killed. It cost us dearly, and we gained little pleasure from the beast’s passing.”

The old man sighed heavily. “It took us a few hours to find its lair—a cavern with a submerged entrance not far from where we fought it. The water around the lair was foul, black, and stagnant; it mirrored the dragon’s dark soul perfectly. Slimy moss clung to the sides of the cavern and coated the treasure. The treasure hoard was immense and comprised gold, silver, and copper coins. But the years and the sodden air had taken their toll on the wealth: The silver and copper coins were heavily tarnished.”

“Are all evil dragon lairs conspicuous by their gloom and ugliness?” Katarine asked.

The old man shrugged. “I have always found them so.” His companion nodded in agreement.

“On the other hand,” added the stranger in the corner, “ugliness, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. An overgrown thicket or weedy quagmire has its own kind of beauty, if you see it when you aren’t afraid for your life. To a closed mind, anything can be ugly.”

“I suppose so,” snapped Hypatia. “But I doubt you have ever found true beauty in or around an evil dragon’s lair.”

“Well,” the stranger returned. “That isn’t quite what I meant. You can’t find an evil dragon’s lair just by looking for the ugliest spot for miles. And even an evil dragon’s lair can be beautiful in the right circumstances. I remember seeing a white dragon’s lair in moonlight. The pale rays streamed into the cave’s mouth, making the icy walls look like sheets of diamonds. The blue light danced and scintillated on the heaped treasure like a great and chilly bonfire.”

“So you’ve fought a dragon, too?”

Katarine asked.

“As I said earlier, I’ve been there before.” The stranger laid down his pipe, folded his arms, and continued. “A few companions and I were walking across an ice floe tracking a large polar bear. A flock of raucous sea birds accompanied us on the chase. I knew things had gone bad when the sky turned silent. The birds had vanished as if by magic. My companions were pleased, certain that we were coming close to the bear. I looked around, scanning the sky for trouble as my companions spread out over the ice to look for our prey. Trouble came from beneath us.

“The dragon burst from the water like a bolt from a crossbow, breaking the surface in a spray of frigid droplets and slivers of ice. One edge of the floe was heaved into the air, and we tumbled toward the water as clumsily as children sliding down a snow-covered hill. Ice and dragon fell thunderously back into the water. As we scrambled on the slippery ice, the dragon lurched toward us. The ice teetered the other way, and we slid and tumbled toward the monster’s jaws. As we fought, the dragon’s thrashing tail smashed the ice beneath us to flinders, and we had to retreat to a larger floe or swim.

“It was like a game to the dragon. It gave us a taste of its breath, a blast of frost that chilled our blood and froze our sodden garments. Then it took to the air. This gave us a chance to ready a few spells and missile weapons, but it gave the dragon a chance to give us another ride. We had scattered in case of another breath attack, and it replied by plummeting onto me. I had been the last to flee from the melee and was thus closest to the water’s edge. When the impact came, it pulverized the ice around me and drove me into the water like a nail under a hammer. The blow flipped the floe like a coin.” I was stunned and battered, but I managed to survive the assault and escape to land

again. My magic saw me through.” The stranger picked up his pipe and examined it. “My companions were delayed from helping me, as a cloud of icy frost rose around them and blinded them.” Obviously, we won, but only after a long and dreadful battle.”

Jonnel looked at the stranger in disbelief. “How could you have survived such a thing?”

“Let’s say that, like these two—” he indicated Hypatia and Sterling “—I am multi-talented.”

Both Hypatia and Sterling stared at the stranger with new interest—and considerable doubt.

“I can’t think of anything worse than meeting some of the dragons that we’ve met,” said Katarine. “Nothing at all.”

“I can,” Sterling interjected. “Red dragons.”

The stranger gave a long nod, leaned back in his chair, and gestured for the old man to continue.

“All the dragons we have been discussing are evil. But there exists nothing more malicious, more basely malevolent than a red dragon,” Sterling said. “The dragon’s hatred burns hotter and brighter than its fiery breath, and its greed is perfect and complete. To a red dragon, wealth is as essential as air, and nearly as important as its vengeance.

“It was many years ago that I encountered my first red dragon. I did not yet fully realize the blackness of their souls, and I almost perished in the confrontation. I had grown fond of a small mountain village. I had friends there and often visited them. However, I grew restless and traveled far from the place, spending years roaming and exploring. When I returned, I found my quaint, idyllic village soiled with blood. A red dragon had moved into the area during my absence, and the villagers were giving young women to it so it would leave the village alone. In youthful outrage, I vowed to use all my magic and power to deal with the vile creature. A villager, one of my closest friends, said he had seen the dragon and would guide me there. He offered to disguise me as another villager so I could find its strengths and weaknesses.

“Unfortunately, the red dragon had found mine. It had *charmed* my friend and compelled him to lead me right up the mountain and into a trap.” He paused, leveled his gaze at the stranger, and continued. “The dragon was old and wise. It had several spells and years worth of cunningly crafted battle plans. As we climbed the mountainside, the dragon

“The boat surged, nearly pitching us into the water. We cast about wildly and found a massive, ink-black head towering above us.”

"The mountain shook as we fought. The red dragon was large, and in its thrashing, it was bringing its own lair crashing down around us."

turned a portion of the rock beneath our feet to mud. Then it showed itself and threatened my companion. I rushed to my companion's side to protect him. The dragon breathed its blistering fire at us both. Only I remained standing. I struggled a long time to get free of the mud, and began climbing to the outcropping where the dragon had shown itself. It was waiting for me. The foul beast breathed twice more as I moved forward and fought it. It spoke, gloating about the village it held in thrall and the succulent villagers on which it fed. It considered everything in its sight its domain, and all living things in its domain its subjects.

"Although I was severely wounded, I began to get the best of the dragon. It retreated into its lair, and I followed, casting spells. It had a considerable resistance to magic, but some of my spells got through. Its anger grew a thousandfold as its prey became its hunter. I believe it was the dragon's anger that proved its undoing. In its blood-red rage, it grew sloppy. The mountain shook as we fought. The red dragon was large, and in its thrashing, it was bringing its own lair crashing down around us. When an opening in the rocks appeared, it pushed the fight outside again and into the air over the village. It was trying to escape me, but I wouldn't let it. As I struck the dragon with a killing blow, I saw the villagers below watching the terrifying spectacle. Then I watched a spectacle, too. With its dying, vengeful breath, the red dragon breathed on the crowd, then fell lifeless onto the roofs of several homes.

"Despite all the treasure that I knew it must have accumulated, I didn't return to its lair. I was so repulsed by the dragon that I left the treasure to the villagers. My friends were all dead. I never went back."

The old man pushed himself away from the table and glanced at Hypatia and the stranger. "There's no more to tell," he said. "I've fought no other species of dragons."

"It's late," the young woman said. "We should be going."

Sterling nodded and got to his feet. The adventurers bid the couple their good-byes and best wishes, then watched as the two walked to the door. The stranger got up and walked with them, having said nothing since Sterling's last story.

"What did you think?" Tehm asked under his breath.

"Didn't believe much of that Sterling's tale," said Jonnel. "Even an old wizard-warrior isn't going to best a red dragon one on one. I've heard about those dragons, too."

Outside the inn's door, the couple and the stranger looked at the quiet landscape as they walked a short distance from the inn. Crickets chirped around them, and night birds called.

"So you know us, then," said Hypatia suddenly. "What kept you from telling everyone?"

The stranger chuckled. "It would have served no purpose but to have frightened the people. And you were in the presence of real, live, vengeful dragon slayers, who might have felt the need to have defended themselves. Better to let the matter drop."

"How did you know?" asked Sterling.

The stranger smiled at him. "The way you spoke. Only a dragon would call the taking of dragon hides barbaric. Only a dragon—a silver one, I might add—could fight a red dragon down, as its frigid breath would harm the red one more terribly than any other dragon's breath. Things like that. And your human name, Sterling, was a cute pun. Sterling silver, after the coin some humans use. Your companion was more practical."

Sterling smiled ruefully. "An old dragon must have his joke. Makes the world a brighter place."

"Indeed," agreed the stranger. "An old dragon must have his joke. And I have had mine as well."

Hypatia stared hard at the stranger. "No," she said.

"Yes," said the stranger. "I believe the human children have a saying that goes, 'It takes one to know one.' They also say, 'Where you find silver . . . you also find gold.'"

Hypatia gasped. Sterling merely stared, open mouthed. Then they both broke into smiles as broad as the stranger's, and the laughter of the three echoed across the valley and into the night.

Footnotes

All of the following notes apply to the AD&D® 2nd Edition game rules and are designed to mesh with the descriptions of the dragons given in the first *Monstrous Compendium*. Though some of this material is official, much of it is unofficial but supplemental, useful for making your dragons even tougher.

1. Cloudlike breath weapons, such as the green dragon's chlorine gas, cannot be negated by a victim who takes the naive precaution of covering his nose and mouth. The damage is not accrued solely by inhaling the gas; the gas is absorbed into the victim's system through the skin.

Clothing and armor afford no extra protection, as the gas can seep through these. Even a *necklace of adaptation* is ineffective, since the gas works on contact.

2. Dragons do not need verbal or somatic components to cast spells. Such spells are cast at will. *Silencing* a dragon will not prevent it from casting spells.

3. This was a *snatch attack*. A dragon can only snatch a creature that is two size classes smaller than it is, so the dragon in the story would have been a huge creature at least (over 12' long). A snatch attack can only be made against one being per round while the dragon is in flight.

4. Because dragons are graceful and competent fliers, they can each fly at three different speeds. The slower they fly, the better their maneuverability classes. The flying speeds and maneuverability classes of black, blue, green, and red dragons are: 18 (C), 24 (D), and 30 (E). White dragons have greater flying speeds: 20 (C), 30 (D), and 40 (E).

5. The dragon undoubtedly performed a *wingover*. A dragon carrying a rider or snatched victim cannot perform a *wingover* unless the creature or creatures carried are at least three size classes smaller than it is.

6. A dragon which is airborne or is at least 30' above a target can *plummet*, inflicting crushing damage equivalent to its bite when it strikes. Using this method of combat, the dragon can crush as many creatures as its 2nd Edition combat modifier indicates. The dragon rolls a separate attack against each intended victim; creatures that are missed are assumed to have escaped. Creatures that are crushed must save vs. petrification or be pinned under the dragon, automatically suffering crushing damage the following melee round. If the dragon chooses to maintain the pin, the victim must save vs. petrification to get free. Pinned creatures take crushing damage each minute until they get free. The dragon's combat modifier applies as a bonus or penalty to all saving throws vs. the crush. A dragon cannot take any other actions while plummeting or pinning, except to bite at pinned victims (at a +2 bonus to hit, biting at one victim per round) or to breathe. If the dragon does anything else, all victims of its crushing attack are set free.

7. When a dragon breathes, it cannot send out its breath weapon again for 1-3 minutes. Roll 1d6: A roll of 1-2 indicates that the dragon can breathe in the next melee round; 3-4 indicates that the dragon can breathe again on the second round following the breath; and 5-6 indicates that the dragon can breathe on the third round following the breath. Allowing a delay will allow PCs a better survival chance against dragons, but it is optional.

All dragons can use their breath weapons three times before they must rest to regenerate the energy for further breaths. Sleeping 1-4 hours restores the energy to

generate one breath weapon, and an additional 1-4 hours restores both of the remaining breath attacks simultaneously. However, most dragons do not automatically wake up after after regaining their three breath weapons. After the minimum 2-8 hours, a dragon will always sleep an additional 1-20 hours minus its intelligence score (treat negative results as zero additional hours). If the dragon is awakened during the extended sleep period, it suffers no ill effects. If a dragon tries to sleep and regain breath weapons more than once during any 24-hour period, the time required is doubled (2-8 hours for the first breath weapon, an additional 2-8 hours for the two remaining breaths, and 2-40 hours minus the dragon's intelligence score for extended sleep).

8. A dragon's tail is an awesome weapon. A number of creatures equal to one-half the dragon's age category may be struck by the tail (round fractions down to a minimum of one creature). For example, a juvenile dragon can strike two creatures with its tail; a great wyrm can strike six. The tail can strike creatures standing behind the dragon or to the side of the dragon as far toward the head as the dragon's wings. Creatures standing within 5' of the tail's root (the point where the tail joins the dragon's body) cannot be lashed with the tail. In one combat round, the dragon can sweep its tail from right to left or left to right; it cannot do both. (Thus, all the targets must be on the same side of the dragon.)

9. Dragons which can burrow are limited to burrowing in their preferred environment. For example, only blue dragons can burrow in sand, and only white dragons can burrow in snow or ice.

10. Dragons can be attacked with the intent of killing or subduing them. All dragons except silver and gold can be subdued. (Brass dragons also are immune under certain circumstances.) The attack form must be announced prior to melee; otherwise, the attack is assumed to be with intent to kill. Only creatures with an average intelligence (8-10) or greater can attack to subdue. In subdual combat, all damage is of a battering or bruising nature. However, the dragon can die if the subdual damage inflicted is equal to two times its hit points. Attackers must do more subdual damage than the dragon has hit points before there is a chance to subdue. For every 1% of subdual damage inflicted over the dragon's hit points, there is a 1% chance to subdue. DMs should check for subdual at the end of every minute of combat. (Subdual damage is not mentioned in the 2nd Edition rules.)

If a dragon is subdued in melee, the dragon will not necessarily remain subdued for an extended period. A dragon will attempt to get away from its master when it believes it can do so without endangering its life. How soon a dragon attempts to escape depends on how it is

treated. Evil dragons will never serve a good master for long; neither will good dragons serve evil masters for long.

Subdued dragons are valuable and can be used as mounts. Such dragons can usually be sold for 100-800 gp per hit point.

11. This is an unusual attack method for white dragons. Because white dragons are limited in intelligence, only the oldest of these dragons will have developed such ruthless and cunning tactics, or have the ability to pick out ice floes that can be flipped over.

12. The duration of a white dragon's *freezing fog* is based on its age. A wyrm's *freezing fog* lasts for 16 rounds, while a great wyrm's lasts for 17 rounds. See details as given in the 2nd Edition *Monstrous Compendium*.

Editorial

Continued from page 5

"illusion of interaction." And you have a DM who never forgets your saving-throw bonuses or loses his place in the rule books. What more could you ask for?

The growth of computer RPGs is worth any gamer's time to watch. Certainly, carrying around a few floppy disks beats hauling a dozen hardbound books any time. And even if you like having your friends around when you play, computers can make your job as a DM many times easier.

Will computer RPGs eventually replace "paper" RPGs? The future will tell. And DRAGON Magazine will be around to find out.

Roger Moore




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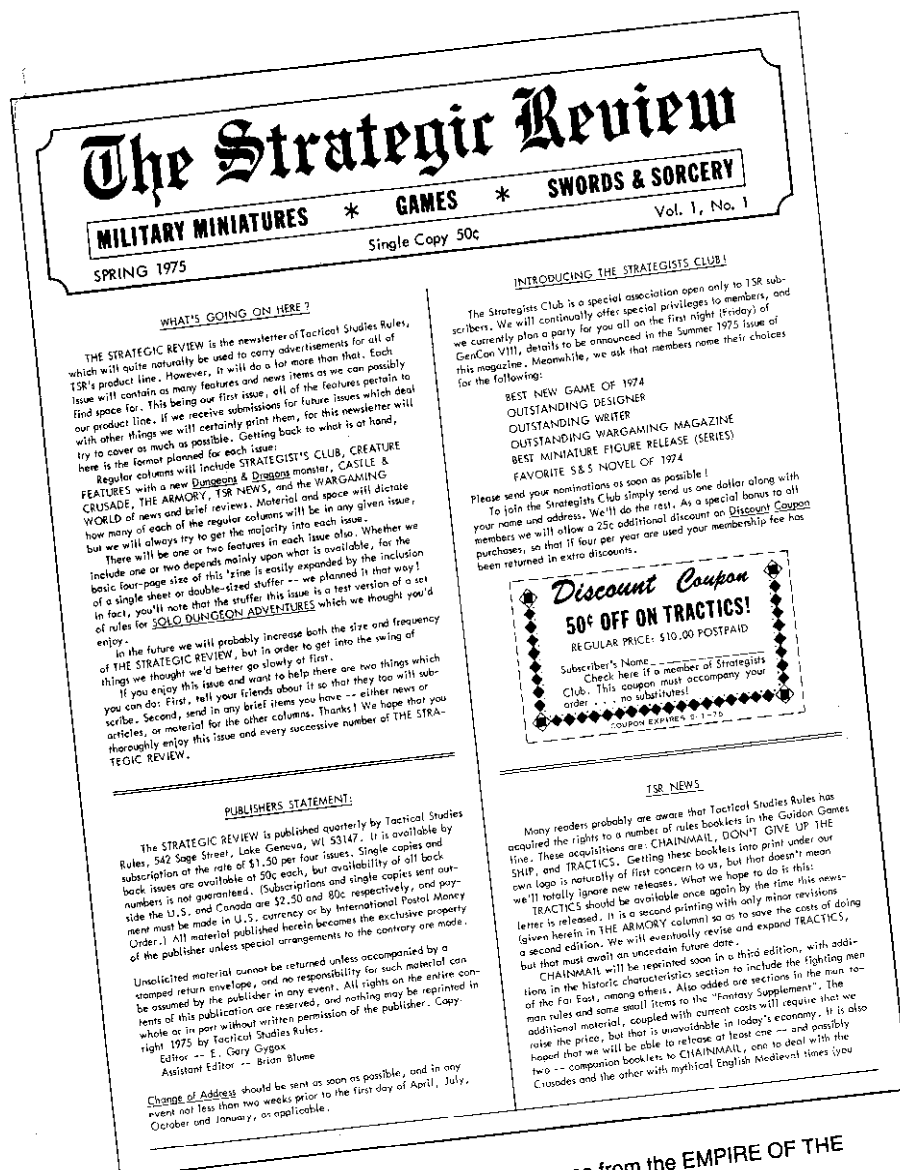
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The Hatchling Magazine



A look at *The Strategic Review* — DRAGON® Magazine's ancestor



Top of page: The ahoggya, a player-character race from the EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE game, from issue #7.
Above: The first page of the first issue of *The Strategic Review*.

Gaming sparks many avenues of interest in addition to actual play. One of these avenues is collecting gaming magazines. It is interesting to note the way in which such magazines develop, often from very humble beginnings. Some fall by the wayside, of course, while others grow to sizes and influences undreamed of by their founders. There are perhaps 4,000,000 D&D® and AD&D® game players worldwide today, yet only 15 years ago there were almost none at all. It was a time when DRAGON® Magazine had not even been thought of, even in its earlier form, *The Dragon*.

Prior to 1973, there was a Castle & Crusade Society, whose founding member was one E. Gary Gyax. The C&C Society was formed by the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association, which prepared the final version of a set of fantasy miniatures, rules called CHAINMAIL. These rules evoked much excitement and interest, with several groups adopting them. Dave Arneson began a medieval fantasy campaign surrounding his Blackmoor setting, which greatly expanded upon the existing rules. Gary Gyax soon heard of this, and the two collaborated on a new set of fantasy rules. Tactical Studies Rules was formed in October 1973 and published the original D&D game in early 1974.

And as for magazines—in the beginning, there was TSR — no, not Tactical Studies Rules, the publishers. TSR referred to *The Strategic Review*, the soon-to-be, first-ever fantasy role-playing game magazine (often referred to as SR in the issues). Not that it called itself that at the time; the world was too young in those days for such ideas. *The Strategic Review* billed itself as "the newsletter of Tactical Studies Rules, which will quite naturally be used to carry advertisements for all of TSR's product line." It made its appearance in Spring 1975 and cost \$0.50

That first issue consists of just six pages, a double quarto folded lengthwise as front and back cover, with a single-sheet insert. The issue is properly typeset and printed in dark green ink on light-weight white paper. The title is set in a shaded box and printed in Old English characters. Below that appears: "MILITARY MINIATURES * GAMES * SWORDS & SORCERY." There is no mention of the D&D game. In fact, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game is listed only once on the title page, with far more space being given to the CHAINMAIL and TRACTICS games (the latter a World War II miniatures rules system).

There is no table of contents (let's face it, there are hardly any contents). Instead, a list of intended regular columns is given, including: "Strategist's Club," "Creature Features" (with a new D&D monster per column), "Castle & Crusade," "The Armory," "TSR News," and the "Wargaming World" of news and brief reviews. The editorial ("What's Going on Here?") continues with some comments concerning expansion and concludes with: "tell your friends about it so that they too will subscribe." Evidently, they told.

The Strategic Review was to be published quarterly by TSR for \$1.50 per four issues. E. Gary Gyax was the editor, and Brian Blume was assistant editor. The Strategists Club was a special association open only to TSR subscribers. The club offered special discounts, the first being a coupon printed on the front page. Thus, for a \$0.50 discount on a set of TRACTICS, subscribers had the opportunity to cut a large hole in this historic issue. Fortunately, I resisted the temptation, but I sometimes wonder how those who did not may feel today.

Page 2 gives us the first "Creature Feature"—the mind flayer, with its major weapon, the mind blast. "Wargaming World" tells us of things that are no more, but mentions that SPI had begun competing with The Avalon Hill Game Company (simply called Avalon Hill then, and TAHGC herein) in the store market, and TAHGC had retaliated with direct-mail games. (Who won that competition?) "The Armory" supplies a TRACTICS amendment for armor penetration, with nary a broad sword in sight. The last item on the page is for postal D&D gaming, which only goes to prove that PBM gaming was in there at the beginning.

On page 3, Gary Gyax discusses "The Spear in Man-to-Man Combat" in the "Castle & Crusade" column—an addition to the CHAINMAIL rules. And here at last is the first special D&D feature article, "Solo Dungeon Adventures," again by, Gyax. Extending over pages 4 and 5, this article consists of a set of rules for solo dungeon exploration in the form of tables for periodic dungeon-construction checks, doors, side passages, turns, and so forth, later

appearing as Appendix A in the AD&D 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide*. This is all fairly basic stuff, which was curiously neglected in the D&D game for a long time afterward. It was left to Flying Buffalo's TUNNELS AND TROLLS™ game to establish rules for running solo FRPG scenarios: Only recently did TSR take up solo adventures again, particularly in the ENDLESS QUEST® books and related book lines.

In the bottom right corner of page 5 is a small, crudely drawn, and unsigned illustration of three knights standing on pedestals in what might be an armory. This is the sum total of artwork for the first issue. Page 6 gives a list of possible subjects with which *The Strategic Review* might deal in future issues, given sufficient reader interest. The subject list (and misspellings) appears at right.

This list tells us one thing with stark clarity: TSR hadn't the faintest idea what it had in its hands. It did not envision what the D&D game would become and was prepared to go in any direction the market seemed to want. It had started a newsletter, but of DRAGON Magazine there was not an inkling.



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Top of page:
Topics of interest
to readers, from issue #1.
Above: Fourteen years
ago, TSR's game catalog
could fit in one column.
(The address and
prices are out of date, and
only the DUNGEONS &
DRAGONS® game survived.)

This issue was published in Summer 1975 and has the same format as the first. This time, black ink was used and there are eight pages (two folded quarto) gummed at the spine. The editorial, "TSR—Why We Do What We Do," by Brian Blume makes interesting reading: "The members of TSR are long-time gamers who have found that there is a great deal of satisfaction in creating and/or publishing a good set of game rules or an enjoyable game, and please note the emphasis on the term gamers . . . In a nutshell, we do not believe that we can ever work too closely with our fellow war-gamers."

The issue contains: "CAVALIERS AND ROUNDHEADS Rules Additions," "Wargaming World," "Questions Most Frequently Asked About DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Rules" (the first "Sage Advice" column), "Creature Feature" (revealing the roper), "Rangers! An Exciting New DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Class" by Joe Fischer, "Medieval Pole Arms" by Gary Gyga, "Panzer Warfare" by Brian Blume, and "TSR News." There was an advertisement for ORIGINS I in Baltimore and another for "GEN CON VIII" in Lake Geneva. We were also invited to cut a hole in the back page for a \$0.25 discount on games this time.

FROM THE RIVENSTAR SONGBOOK THE UNICORN SONG by Moonwulf of Rivenstar*

Well, you know I once had a unicorn for a friend,
One time, a long time ago.
His horn was of twisted gold, pointed on the end,
And his coat was of silver-white snow.
Sometimes he'd let me climb up on his back,
And we'd ride through the mountains all day;
He told me the secrets that unicorns know,
And I missed him when he went away.

I once knew a dragon, a cousin of Puff,
All yellow and bright golden-red.
He looked ferocious, but he never breathed fire,
Sometimes he'd let me climb up on his back,
And we'd fly through the mountains all day;
He told me the secrets that all dragons know,
And I missed him when he went away.

And now I've got a manticores for a friend,
And he sure is ugly to see.
He's nasty and vicious, and he'll eat anything,
And he's standing right behind —
(GOBBLE, SLURP, CRUNCH, CRUNCH!)

*also known as Michael Longcor

The Strategic Review

MILITARY MINIATURES

* GAMES

* SWORDS & SORCERY

Vol. 1, No. 2

Single Copy 50¢

SUMMER 1975

IN MEMORIAM

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE
MEMORY OF DONALD R. KAYE, CO-
FOUNDER OF TACTICAL STUDIES RULES,
LONG-TIME FRIEND, AND FELLOW
WARGAMER. DON WAS BORN 27 JUNE
1938 AND DIED 31 JANUARY 1975. WE
DEEPLY MOURN HIS PARTING.

TSR — WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO
Editorial Comment by Brian J. Blume

Tactical Studies Rules is not a giant company; it is not even a large one. But we are growing now, and in the future we might attain substantial size. While we must make a profit in order to remain in business, TSR is not around solely to make money. The members of TSR are long-time gamers who have found that there is a great deal of satisfaction in creating and/or publishing a good set of game rules or an enjoyable game, and please note the emphasis on the term gamers. Some attempt to down-grade the game aspect of our hobby and pretend to simulate situations, although some of the excitement and challenge of reality can be reflected in a game, although a game always remains a game. Thus, we try to publish rules and games which are easy to play, logical, and still give some of the "flavor" of the particular era or battle or whatever it is they cover. This, of course, cannot apply to those fantasy and science fiction titles where reality is not usually relevant. In these cases the stress is on providing a framework which excites and challenges the players as they develop their own games. The keynote in all of our publications has been flexibility, tempered with playability, and mixed with the proper amount of "authenticity" so as to retain the sense of historical realism or game realism. We hope you will always find that we have succeeded.

Of course, whatever TSR does is meaningless without your support. We must know if we are providing what you, our fellow hobbyists, really like and want. Sales reports tell us that so far we have been coming pretty close to the mark, but we also welcome your letters telling us what rules or games you would like TSR to produce. Just to

make it easier we have included a short section listing a few possibilities, and if you see something you like — or find we have missed your favorite — drop us a line and give us the word. In a nutshell, we do not believe that we can ever work too closely with our fellow war-gamers, for TSR's sole justification for its existence is to provide you with products which you desire. When I mentioned that the members of TSR were long-time gamers I was speaking of a combined total of about 50 years for the three of us — that is 50 years of battle gaming, for if chess were to be included it would be more like 75 years! Such experience, even considering our past design work in addition to it, is not sufficient to make us in any way independent of the hobby. So we will always attempt to keep in touch with you as closely as possible. We know that we need your support, not vice versa. Thanks for the confidence you have shown so far!

THE STRATEGISTS CLUB

Because our first issue won't reach anywhere near the circulation of this one until sometime after you're reading this, we are holding off compiling the answers to the poll we ran in Number 1 of SR. If you haven't sent in a card with your choices there is still time to make your votes known. Here is the reason they are important.

THE FIRST ANNUAL STRATEGISTS CLUB AWARDS BANQUET will be held at 7:30 P.M. on the 22nd of August (Friday) 1975 at the Cargyle Restaurant, only a block north of the Horticultural Hall. Trophies will be awarded for the categories named in SR 1 (BEST NEW GAME OF 1974, OUTSTANDING DESIGNER, OUTSTANDING WRITER, OUTSTANDING WARGAME MAGAZINE, BEST MINIATURE FIGURE RELEASE, FAVORITE S&S NOVEL OF 1974). The trophies awarded will be inscribed: "Strategists Club Awards, Creativity in Gaming," and then the category and year will appear. Naturally, the awards will be presented after the banquet — this year's dinner of the beef with a keg of ale to wash it down with. Members interested in attending should send a \$2.00 registration fee immediately, as the entire cost of the banquet, as TSR plans to pick up the major portion of maximum of 50 persons will be able to attend. The \$2.00 will cover the tab. There will also be a ballot drawing after the awards are presented, and the SC member whose ballot is picked at random will receive a gift certificate good for \$20 worth of TSR publications, and that should provide all the incentive necessary for you to vote even if you won't be able to attend the banquet.

This time we are asking you to let us know what you think of the following possibilities for miniatures rules and game offerings. These questions are directed at Strategists Club members on the assumption that you are the more dedicated and active individuals amongst our

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Editor — E. Gary Gyga
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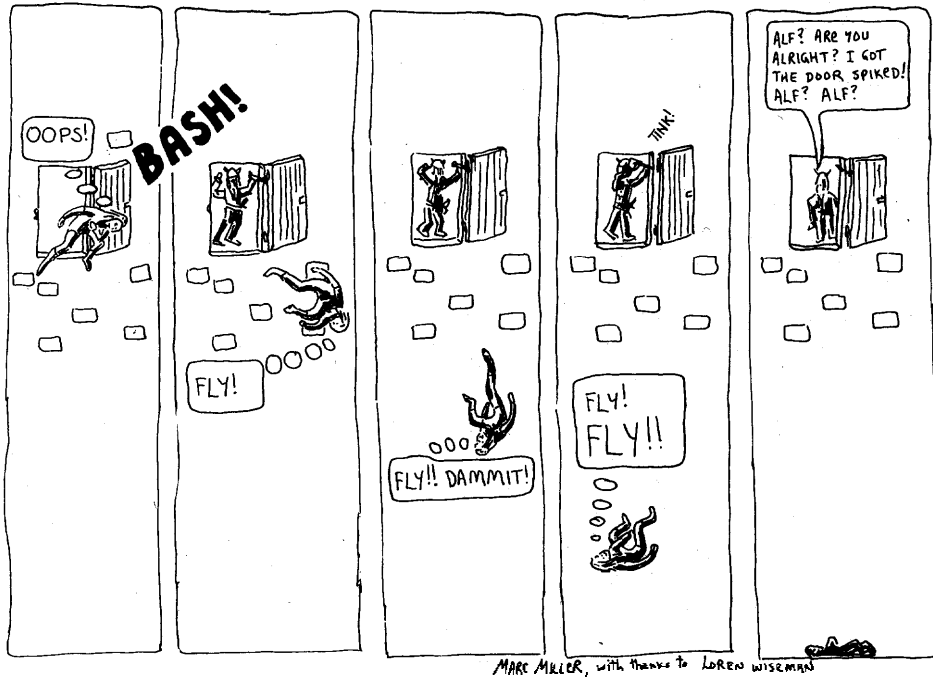
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Above: The passing of Donald Kaye, a co-founder of TSR, is noted on the cover of issue #2.
Left: "The Unicorn Song" from issue #3.

The Strategic Review #3

This issue was published in Autumn 1975. Although similar in format to its predecessors, issue #3 is printed on glossy paper, in black ink, and runs to eight stapled pages. The editorial by Gary Gyga waxes indignant over some bad reviews for CHAINMAIL and the D&D game by Arnold Hendrick, who has offered a competing rules set. "TSR News" announces the formation of a new division, TSR Hobbies (which sells miniatures), and proposes yet another, TSR Games (which introduces games). "Creature Features" and the humorous "Monster Reference Table Addition, Hostile & Benign Creatures" take up

most of pages 2 and 3, but the remainder of the issue is given over to Napoleonic, gunfighters (for the BOOT HILL® game), SF ("Deserted Cities of Mars," by Jim Ward), news, and advertisements. In "Mapping the Dungeon," Dave Arneson describes an encounter between "The Great Svenny, Marty the Elf, Richard the Hairy, and 5 berserkers against 26 soldiers with 2 cars, 2 trucks, 4 light mg's, 2 motars [sic] (60 mm), and the usual bevy of small arms." (The Nazis lost!) There is also a list of D&D game GMs and clubs—eight of them, in fact.



MARC MILLER, with thanks to LOREN WISEMAN

It is not the purpose of this article to discuss precisely which publication constitutes the first FRPG magazine. *The Strategic Review* (issues #1-4) could be described as that, but it is not. *The Strategic Review*, in fact, mentions two other publications as "D&D oriented magazines" in *The Strategic Review* #4: *Alarums & Excursions* and *Kranor-Rill*. In *The Strategic Review* #6, *Alarums & Excursions* is even awarded a Major Triumph and described as "far and away the best D&D 'zine."

Later advertising for *The Strategic Review* describes the periodical as "The Journal of Military Miniatures, Swords & Sorcery, Games and Wargaming News featuring the TSR line," which falls somewhere between the original newsletter concept and the FRPG magazine it rapidly became. In addition, there were various other newsletters, newszines, and proposals offering similar coverage around the same time. Nevertheless, they all drew their FRPG inspiration from, *The Strategic*

The Strategic Review #4

Published in Winter 1975, the color of this issue is blue, with 12 pages and the format much the same as before; the price, however, is now \$0.75. In this issue, there are a few matters of note. Gygax tells us in the editorial that TSR is expanding so fast that neither he nor Brian Blume can keep up with correspondence. They have received so much excellent D&D game material from readers that it cannot all be published in *The Strategic Review*, even now that it is going bimonthly. More hands are called for. Timothy Kask has joined as periodicals editor, Terry Kuntz as service manager, and Dave Arneson is about to join the regular design staff.

Inside, there is: "Castle & Crusade" ("A Few More Words On Medieval Pole Arms," by Gygax); "Panzer Warfare: Additional Unit Organizations," by Brian Blume; an advertisement for *DUNGEON!* (the board game); "The Armory" ("TRACTICS Weapon/Vehicle Gun Changes" by Mike Reese); "Illusionists!" a new D&D game character class by Peter Aronson; "Tsolyani Names Without Tears" (Professor M. A. R. Barker's explanation of the Tsolyani language used in the *EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE* game, then published by TSR); "Creature Features" (the clay, golem); and "Mighty Magic Miscellany" (presenting *ioun* stones). A cartoon by Marc Miller and Loren Wiseman, now of Game Designers' Workshop, appears on page 5, with the first ad for a non-TSR game, GDW's *EN GARDE!*, on page 10. FRPG topics are noticeably dominant in this issue, now occupying the majority of the games space. And there is one other announcement, repeated through the issue: "THE DRAGON IS COMING!"



Top of page: One of the first cartoons, from issue #4. Above: The cover takes shape on issue #5.



Above: "Sturmgeschutz and Sorcery," from issue #5. Below: "Sage Advice," from issue #6.

Review, so there is no question of the original source. The very terms "FRP" and "adventure gaming" were not in general use (if at all) until the appearance of this magazine. The first example of an evolving concept is often difficult to pin down, but in this case, the event is clearly defined.

The *Dragon* may have been coming, but with *The Strategic Review* #5, the FRP magazine had already arrived; of that, there is no doubt. Published in December 1975, *The Strategic Review* #5 has an entirely new look. Gone is the old title block and three-quarters-text page. In the newest issue, we have a wizard conjuring the elements in a full-page, black-and-white cover art by Greg Bell. The title is moved to one side, and the only other text announces three items "In This Issue." Issue #5 has artwork on most of its 16 pages as well.

The magazine's changes, however, are not purely cosmetic. *The Strategic Review* is now bimonthly. Inside, we have "In the Cauldron" written by the editor, Tim Kask, as a replacement for "TSR News." There are short autobiographical profiles of Gygas, Blume, Robert Kuntz, Theron Kuntz, and Kask. The remainder of the issue is taken up by solid FRPG material, except for Dave Arneson's "The Battle of the Nile Refought" and a page of TRACTICS additions in "The Armory." There is the "Gallery of Gunfighters, Part III, about gunslinger Ben Thompson, and Gygas's "Sturmgeschutz and Sorcery, or, How Effective is a Panzerfaust Against a Troll, Heinz?" In this latter piece, Gygas offers suggestions for combining the D&D game with TRACTICS ("At this moment the orcs

broke cover, hoping to continue their luck; after all they had not yet been fired upon. Six automatic weapons opened up and cut the lot to bits.") Other materials include "Creature Features" (the rakshasa, the slithering tracker, and the trapper) and "Mighty Magic Miscellany" (the robe of scintillating color and prayer beads). Reader-generated material on the D&D game was still pouring in, and the DM list had grown to 20.

There are two items that make particularly interesting reading in the light of later developments. The first is Gygas's article, "Sturmgeschutz and Sorcery." It opens with these words: "D&D is a game of many facets, and occasionally we cook up a few little surprises. . . . How could we mix moderns with swords & sorcery? The structure of D&D is such that it easily lends itself to such adaptation." Contrast this with the call for orthodoxy and the use of only "authorized material" in *DRAGON* issue #67, "Poker, Chess, and the

AD&D™ System: The Official Word on What's Official" by the same author:

The AD&D game system does not allow the injection of extraneous material. That is clearly stated in the rule books. It is thus a simple matter: Either one plays the AD&D game, or one plays something else. . . . Serious players will only accept official material, for they *play* the game rather than playing at it, as do those who enjoy "house rules" poker. . . . Such games are not D&D or AD&D games—they are something else, classifiable only under the generic "FRPG" catch-all. . . . Either you play TSR's D&D or AD&D games, or you play variants of them. . . . Adding non-official material puts your game outside the D&D or AD&D game system. It becomes something else at best. . . . Far too often, extraneous material tinkered onto the existing D&D or AD&D campaign will quickly bring it down to a lower level at best, ruin it at its worst. Fads and "new, state-of-the-art" games come and go, but the D&D and AD&D games keep on growing and improving. The choice is yours.

The second item is entitled "What is the National Wargame Convention?" This article compares (from TSR's point of view) ORIGINS I and "GenCon" (now the GEN CON® Game Fair). It also provides a brief history of the latter from its inception as a one-day-affair in 1968. The item takes umbrage at TAHGC's "misleading claim" that ORIGINS was the sole national convention, and figures are produced to prove that GenCon VIII was bigger and better in every way. The article concludes with the following words: "We support Origins, and when the second convention is held we will be in Baltimore ready to play! Yet we will allow no other event to steal GenCon's glory." Ah, how things did change. . . .

With the birth of the true FRPG magazine, it is clear that the D&D game is beginning to take off. The mailer that came with the issue offered a lifetime subscription to *The Strategic Review* (by Crom, now *there* was a bargain). There is another call to the readership for guidance on which direction to take, but that direction is now only perceived in terms of the D&D game.



Sage
Advice

by

Theronius

The Strategic Review #6

Though TSR's direction was centered on the D&D game, other influences lingered. Issue #6 was published in February 1976, and sports a group of World War I triplanes on the cover, presumably in honor of the FIGHT IN THE SKIES game, which had been added to the TSR line. The issue is printed entirely in purple ink. Its contents are very interesting in a number of respects. We are told in "In the Cauldron" that TSR is moving into its new shop, The Dungeon. We are also informed that Dave Arneson has joined the team at Lake Geneva as a full-time employee. "Wargaming World" repeats the offer from issue #5 of D&D Volumes 1 and 2 with pullouts and box—for \$4! And, it seems that there was an abysmal response to the suggestion of D&D game seminars (by Gygax, Arneson, and Rob Kuntz) at the upcoming GenCon ("If we are to decide by the response we have had by now, there won't be one").

Gygax gives his first exposition on "The Meaning of Law and Chaos in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS and Their Relationships to Good and Evil," a subject long puzzling to the devoted. "Triumphs & Tragedies" awarded a Triumph to a new gaming magazine called *The Space Gamer*. Next comes fiction by Rob Kuntz, "The Quest for the Vermillion Volume," which presumably accounts for the issue's ink color. Changes to Professor Barker's WAR OF WIZARDS game are proposed, and a solitaire gaming version is provided. "Statistics Regarding Classes: (Additions)—BARDS," by Doug Schwegman, adds a new PC class. "Mighty Magic Miscellany" deals with bards' harps by the same author. There is a BOOT HILL experimental rule by Blume, and "Dwarves and Clerics in DUNGEON!" by Gygax. Dennis O'Leary expounds upon the ANCIENT CONQUEST game in "New Game, New Strategy," and some corrections to the D&D booklet *Greyhawk* are offered in a new column called "Sage Advice," by one Theronius. "Mapping and Dungeons" lists all known DMs and D&D game clubs; there are now 52 of them. Apart from a page on the FIGHT IN THE SKIES game, the entire 16 pages are concerned with FRPGs—and, as a note on page 7 reminds us, *The Dragon* still approaches!

The Strategic Review #7

"The Last" (as it is subtitled) issue of *The Strategic Review* was published in April 1976. It is priced at \$1 and has a full-color cover of a rampant elephant about to stomp some poor soldier. Illustrations abound inside among the 24 pages, and although it is announced that *The Dragon* has arrived (with the next issue), it was very close to being there already.

"In The Cauldron" tells us that "For some time now, we have felt that our title was

somewhat misleading, particularly so since we have drifted deeper and deeper into fantasy and science fiction, not to mention swords & sorcery." So the upshot was that yet another division of TSR Hobbies, Inc. was formed: TSR Periodicals. This new division would produce two magazines: "one devoted to S&S, Fantasy, Sci-Fi and roleplaying games, and the other to deal with the established types and periods of wargaming." Is this the first use of the term "roleplaying games"? It seems unlikely, but it is the first usage in *The Strategic Review*. Thus were born *The Dragon* and *Little Wars*. They were eventually to amalgamate with issue #22 (February 1979) of *The Dragon*—but that is another story.

The editorial takes up the question of ORIGINS vs. GenCon. The comments in issue #5 have "stirred up a veritable hornet's nest," that make fascinating reading from today's vantage point. Don Greenwood from TAHGC is quoted extensively as putting forward the proposition that no convention can claim to be national unless TAHGC and SPI are there. TSR takes exception to this and is greatly put out by the suggestion that GenCon is merely

regional. There is a good deal of storm and fury that goes on for half a page, the gist of which is that the battle lines are drawn. Indeed, the new letters column, "Out On a Limb," features not one but two letters by E. Gary Gygax himself, one on the very same subject.


The first article is "The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Magic System," by Gygax, in which he expounds upon the "Vancian" magic system (after Jack Vance) as used in the D&D game. The BOOT HILL game is represented with "The Fastest Guns That Never Lived," by Blume, Gygax, and Kask. "What Price Gold & Glory?" by Jim Hayes, is the issue's fiction piece. The first "Hints for D&D Judges," by Joe Fischer, appears in this issue, along with "Ancient and Medieval Standard Military Symbols," by Gygax. In addition, "The Missile Weapon in Classic Warfare" (by Gygax), "To the Everlasting Glory of the Petal Throne (more EMPIRE OF THE PETAL THRONE material by Professor Barker), and "D&D is Only as Good as the DM" (by Gygax) help round out the issue. This last article is aimed at Monty Haul DMs. Herein, Gygax states that "BLACKMOOR is the only campaign with a life of five years, and GREYHAWK

The Strategic Review

Vol. II No. 2 The Last April '76

In this Issue:

- ♦ The D&D Magic System...p. 3
- ♦ On Being A DM...p. 22
- ♦ Te'kumel Update...p. 20
- ♦ The Missile Weapons in CLASSIC WARFARE...p. 18
- ♦ The Demise of SR...pp. 2 & 14



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(See pp. 2 & 14)



but The Dragon has only begun! (an advertisement from issue #7.)

[has] a life of four. . . . To my certain knowledge no player in either *BLACK-MOOR* or *GREYHAWK* has risen above 14th level."

"Creature Features" presents the Denebian slime devil and the catoblepas, and "Mighty Magic Miscellany" provides the *cup and talisman of Akbar*, the *staff of the priest kings*, and the *brazen bottle*.

Another interesting feature is the double-page center spread advertising the opening of The Dungeon, TSR's hobby shop. There are five photos of the shop interior, three of which show Gyga, Blume, and

Terry Kuntz hard at work on our behalf.

The last words belong to E. Gary Gyga ("Out On A Limb," February 14, 1976): "The STRATEGIC REVIEW was originally conceived as a magazine, dealing with all sorts of wargame subjects, but popular demand has made it into an almost wholly fantasy-oriented publication (and the name is thus quite inappropriate!). . . . Therefore, we are changing the name of SR to THE DRAGON, a name more indicative of its content; and there will continue to be more and better articles therein, all of primarily fantasy-oriented nature,



although some science fiction or other type of wargaming may slip in occasionally. Your eager subscription to our publication has given us the message loud and clear. You want a 'zine dealing with fantasy wargaming, and that is what you shall have."

[Some of the most entertaining articles from The Strategic Review are reprinted in the Best of DRAGON Magazine anthology, volume 1.]

Ω

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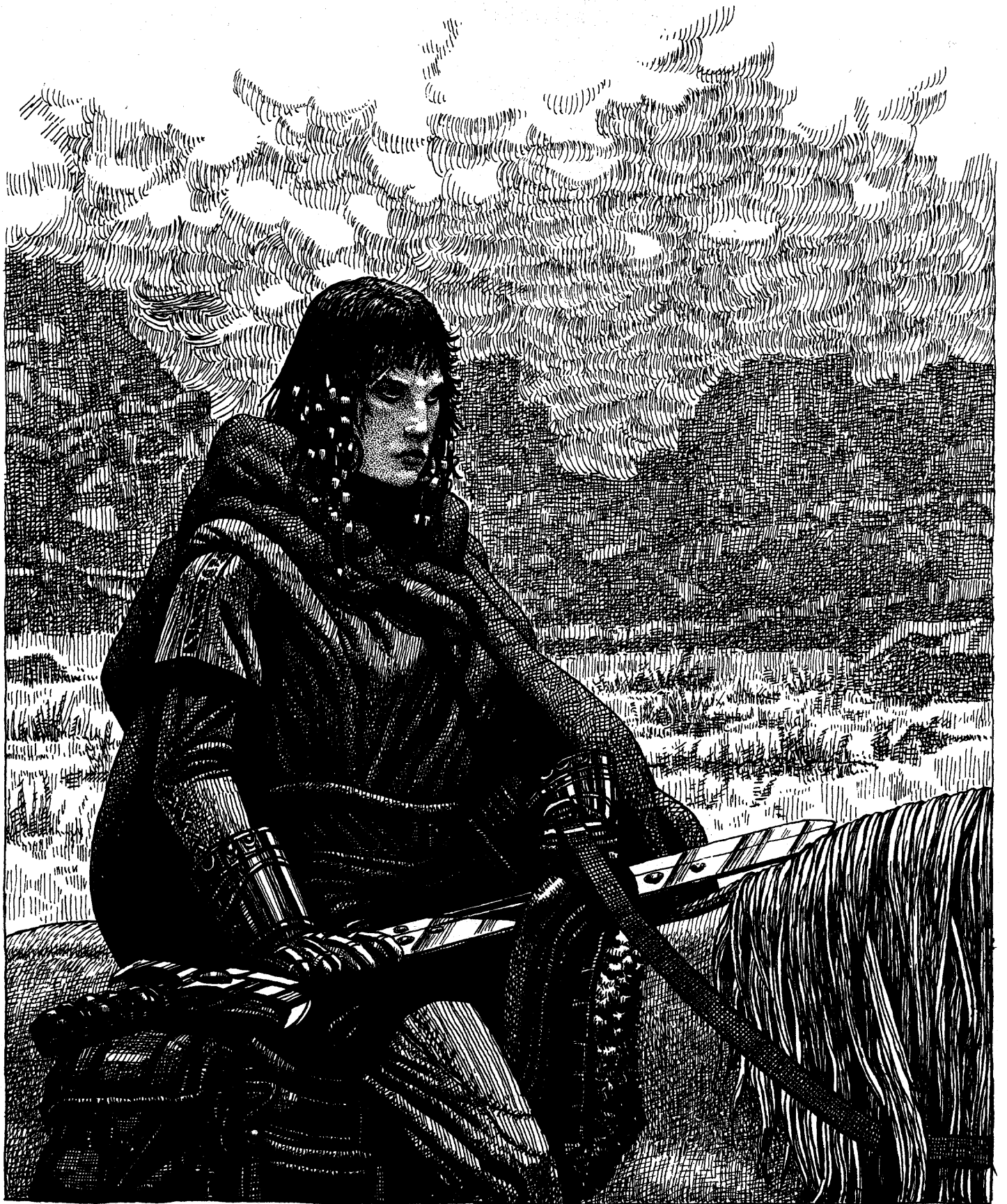
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uana Rulane was a hero. Practically speaking, in terms of semantics and sex, she should have been a heroine, but heroines are rather more associated with the staunch maintenance of husbands, children, and the gentler arts of domestic order.

But Ruana Rulane was a hero—which is to say, vastly inconvenient except in time of war. And this was peacetime.

This was not to say she wasn't a well-trying and acceptable hero, as self-willed anarchic moralists go. She had slain giants, faced down bandits, meddled where she wasn't wanted for the sheer joy of it, gotten brief glory and a little legend and would have had more if she'd stopped in any of the places willing to take in a hero and a sword.

But she didn't. Like most heroes, she was on a quest. Like some heroes, she was pretty sure she'd thrown over her every happiness in favor of having her own way. She'd listened too hard one day to an inner voice that told her she was special, and after a solid young lifetime of backing and forthing, missed opportunities and bad choices, she'd followed her convictions to the point where she was sitting in a worn saddle on an indifferent horse on a muddy road, hearing the carved bone rings in her hair go rattle-click and watching someone else's destiny make a royal, nuisance of itself in front of her.

Destiny blocked the road, spilled into the rut-wet, half-plowed spring fields, and squandered itself joyously on the land around. Destiny was two dozen of the Grey Duke's soldiers and a jagranatha more glorious than anything found outside a festival procession in the war-duke's capital. The only trouble with the jagranatha was that it was not in the city. It was in the country, and so it was in a ditch. And the fourteen milk-white oxen with gilded horns and golden nose-rings who drew it went with such commendable gravity and unstoppable deliberation that the jagranatha was now wedged eternally into the sloppy space between the fields and the road.

This was a grave misfortune for the Grey Duke and whatever possession of his needed to travel with such pomp. But it did not seem to contain, as a situation, the seeds of any wrong whatsoever that needed to be righted, and Ruana did not intend to let her horse stand and acquire whatever Crownking-forgotten ailments an overheated nag left standing in cold mud could catch. So she turned her beast aside for a politic detour over the half-plowed fields, and with inevitability was hailed back by the soldiers to help pull the sacred cart out of the ditch.

One more horse and one more body wasn't going to make any difference. Ruana knew it. The soldiers knew it. But they were all of them, including the oxen, snabbed by destiny, sorcery, or the perversity of human nature, and so the soldiers called to her, and she came, and the jibes started out "boy" and went on "woman" and then somebody knew her story.

Ruana Rulane, the Twiceborn. Genuine hero, certified oddity, ripe with triumph and tragedy and perils surmounted. They were disappointed that she didn't look more like a glittering ale-house legend, though the Grey

The Ever-After

by eluki bes shahar

Illustrations by Janet Aulisio

Duke's men of all people should have known better. They began jostling one another as men do, badgering their disappointment into contempt, angry and somehow cheated that they couldn't claim the pleasant conquests and certifications of grace that she could and didn't. And then it came, as it had to. The sword, the tale, and the challenge, and Ruana stood in the cold mud to hear it.

Half a year, a year ago (tales varied), it came to the Grey Duke's attention that there was something new in his domain, and he wanted it. This much was fact. The lightning, firedrakes, visions, and intimations godly and demonic varied from man to man. Ruana did her best, in kindness, to believe all of them. In the end the Duke, well and truly impressed by something, had sent one of the wide carts that conveyed idols through his city into the dispirited mud of the northwest to claim his prize.

They'd found it. They were bringing it back. And possibly by autumn the Grey Duke's soldiers escorting the jagranatha would have covered the one-week-on-horseback's distance to the city.

It was a sword, they said, that killed anyone who touched it except a true hero. And then they laughed and let the matter lie for a moment, and one of them cuffed the drover back to his place at the head of the first yoke of oxen.

The oxen heaved, the jagranatha tipped, and there was a forerunning sound of sliding. Then Ruana saw the sword. It was the dreaming, lit-seawater green of meteoric glass, shimmering wicked, wide-bladed and translucent.

Love me, it said, and Ruana's spirit lived in her eyes to answer.

Then there was a winking flame of rubies caught cloudy candyfire in the blade, and Ruana looked away, heartsick. A mock blade. A ritual blade. Nobody jewelled a sword-blade he meant to use.

But there was more noisy fuss as the Grey Duke's magic sword slid into the mud and lay glinting on its jellied surface, and gradually Ruana, standing flatfoot and perilous with the mud sliding intimate into her boots, realized none of the Grey Duke's swordsmen dared touch it. Priests had loaded it with chants and wooden tongs, priests who were now fat and warm and fuddled with wine at the best inn to be reached in a day's journey.

Just before the moment when twenty cold and irritated soldiers doing a job both dangerous and ridiculous decided to prove to a traveller with a legend that she could be miserable too, Ruana walked out from among them and picked up the sword that killed with a touch.

She knew priests and didn't like them. Most of them lied.

It was a two-handed sword—had to be, with that size—but the black-bone hilt was grooved to make it possible to lift one-handed. There was a ruby round as an egg and clear as water in the pommel, and the weapon rallied sweetly, with lightsome balance.

She did not die.

"Happen it be I'll take this toy off to yon gey fat chanters for you, and spare you each the trouble of being where the other is." Her voice was husky, having been forced to loudness on a number of battlefields.

They wouldn't come near her. They didn't stop her. She could have taken the sword anywhere she chose. But

Ruana knew the name of the inn the priests would be at and had every intention of going only there. She saw no point in stealing useless enchanted swords and less point in being hunted out of the Grey Duke's holdings before time.

She would be, eventually. It was inevitable. Heroes don't compromise and dukes don't reason. He'd send people to chase her off or summon her and offer her gold to do something she didn't want. And then . . . Well, there were always more lands to the south.

But that was for later. The mud dried on her boots as her horse jogged down the road.

Love me, said the sword, seductive in her hand as she rode, and made her dream of triumph. Of finding the mythic Starharp and playing it to wake the sleeping Crownking. Of doing deeds to draw the singers from their patrons' praises to make a song of her and her alone.

Lost, glittered the sword. *Lost, forsaken, betrayed* . . . The sky grew dark. Ruana frowned, and spurred her horse, and remembered.

Once, a long time ago in the far north country, there was an eclipse, and in its shadow a woman was brought to bed of her firstborn in the same hour its father died. She lost husband and daughter in that hour, and then her name, because to baffle the vengeance of the cheated child-ghost it was decreed by the elders of that small village that Ruana should become-a man. The bone ornaments were quickly brought, and the drums and herbs, and when the dance was over there was no grief spent on husband and girlchild, for Rulane Twiceborn had none.

And when Rulane had been schooled to an honorable man's estate, skilled with sword and bow and sling, Ruana left. Sword and horse and ivory dice were all the patrimony and dowry of Ruana Rulane.

Hero, hero, hero, sang the drumsong of the horse's hooves. The sword she carried for another was light and glowing in her hands. Never a moment to weep for the daughter died burning, no tears to give for her lover, her husband, dead under the ice. They had taken everything from her—her name, her family, her past, her future.

Lost. Lost, forsaken, betrayed . . . The sword danced in her hand, instinct with violence.

With such a sword as this she could return to the place where she had been born, and with its blade of liquid light school priest-elders to sorrow. She could make the stars weep for the day that had birthed such a glorious abomination—not man, not woman, not mother nor yet the child of any mother. Twiceborn. Ruana Rulane, the Twiceborn.

The ghosts of future glory gathered around her. They would pay; oh, how they would pay.

Ruana checked the horse and gazed down at the sharp-wild sword with dreaming eyes. *Shadowkiss*, she named it, and touched the heart's-blood crystal of the gems in the blade.

But why would I want to go back north? Her mouth stretched wry with puzzlement. Her past was a story, and a pretty story for a singer's tongue, but it was over and done. If she could even find the village where she had

been born it would be nothing like she remembered. And though she might kill the villagers every one, she could not make them sorry that they had protected themselves from evil times.

The lure of her past drew back. *Sword, what are you?*

Lover.

Ruana picked up the reins again and urged the horse onward.

The river bridge was out, and her horse didn't like the water. She couldn't blame the beast, with the river running spring-flood high, but the ferryman who should have been there was nowhere to be seen. He might be off drinking Duke's gold, or dead, or as little fond of a river in spate as Ruana's horse was. At any rate, he wasn't there.

She swung west, following the riverbank. The sword lay across her thighs, hot and living. A spare league south was the inn full of priests whose charge she had carried off. Soon enough (she would do it, in their place) a rider would come from the soldiers to dress her abduction of the sword in fantastic language. She made no doubt he'd find a way across the river. Trouble always did, and then it would be the priests who decided how much more trouble to make.

Still, likely they wouldn't make a decision before tomorrow dawn. She could ride all night if she had to, providing she could ford the river by the end of the day.

And give the sword back. Her hand tightened on the rough bone of the hilt. If she could.

Shadowkiss.

The edge of the river became sheer-cut mud cliffs and brambles, narrow enough to jump on a better horse. Ruana followed the river road as it swung inland, and the dripping trees opened to fields again.

Burned fields.

Here there had been no spring plowing. Last year's weed and stubble were seared to black, gone liquid with the rain, and her horse shied at the stink.

Then she came to the freehold.

She had seen a number like it here in the south. A fine big house with barns and stables, and lesser houses for carle and carline in a ring just inside the ditches that could hold palisades. in time of war.

No more. The cottages were smoke and ash. The barn door hung half off its hinges, displaying emptiness, and the stable was charcoal bones. If the palisades had ever been erected, there was no sign of them now.

She wasn't an utter fool. A magic sword and a duke's displeasure were trouble enough. If she wanted more she could come back here later to find what had blighted the crops and burned the buildings. Later. Half of being a live hero was the timing. She clucked to her horse and turned its head to ride away.

But they came out of the house to her and stood starveling-gaunt in ragged gowns and tunics, survivors of a freehold that saw outsiders maybe twice in a year, and not even that now that the horses were dead.

There was no use asking them why they didn't leave, no more than asking them why they didn't fight. Either choice was suicide. The land and their labor on it were all they had.

They looked at Ruana with hungry eyes, and even her patched and worn leathers were finery to them, Hero, they said to the bone rings braided in her hair, and stretched their eyes to the luminous glass-green of her jewelled sword. Save us.

"Ah, damn the lot of you!" the hero snarled, brandishing the borrowed sword in a glittering arc. It hummed, sweet as pack-ice in deep winter, and her horse side-stepped, unimpressed. The old question rose unbidden in her mind, and there was still only one answer.

If not her, then who? If not now, when?

"Happen some one of you will know where it bides," she said resignedly. "Happen you'll show me where to go."

She'd known what it was when she saw the fields. They didn't like the warmth of a southern summer; left alone this one might sleep till autumn. But the crofters wouldn't go out to the fields while they thought it was there, and if they did, it would be roused by the scent and sound of prey and attack.

She bullied them into giving her what she needed, coaxing them with promises of victory and brave tales of heroism. With a few hours of daylight left, she loaded the casks and the torches and the firepot onto her horse and went off with the least terrified of the survivors to show her the way.

The worm had laired upland. Her horse stopped at the edge of the gummy, cast-seared earth, and would go no farther. She swore, and tied the shivering animal to a tree, blindfolding it to make it stand. The glass sword she sheathed reluctantly in the earth and drew her own familiar blade of browned iron. It would not do to injure what she was still hoping to return.

But it hurt to let it go. They were meant to be together. Together their word would shape the world.

"What do you want me to do?" The boy's voice jarred her back to herself.

In truth, she'd counted herself lucky he'd come with her this far. It was an act of bravery, and there'd be no particular virtue in being a hero if bravery was easily come by. Now she took a closer look at him and saw, if not the noble lineaments of singer's tales, at least the mark of more and better food in childhood.

"Land-holder's bairn be, hinny?" she asked kindly.

The northland dialect was unfamiliar to him, but he understood enough. "My father was freeholder here. The dragon killed him. Now I'm freeholder. I want to help you kill the dragon."

Ruana saw the stubbornness under the dirt, and the bleak knowledge that to hold the crofters to him now he must add "Dragonslayer" to his name, like it or not.

"Well then," she said, accepting. "If you're after killing worm, my callant, take up one of those casks and come along."

"... worm-lair has two ways in. Other one'll be hidden, and likely we could spend a planter's year looking for it. But worm's a fashious hellicat, and if we block up one entrance, he'll be bound to come and see why."

She was far from being as confident as she sounded, but

she had killed worms before, even with unskilled help. Fire blinded them, and at the very least the thing would lair somewhere else.

Dickon stuck the torches into the ground. Ruana lit them all from the firepot, then stove in the top of the first oil-cask.

"Mind you get ready to run."

"I'm not afraid!" But his hands were shaking as he took the open cask and headed up the side of the worm-hill.

"Hurry, damn you!" The words came out more sharply than she'd intended. They'd made enough noise to wake it; if the worm came out on top of Dickon, he wouldn't have to worry about holding his father's lands.

His feet left dusty footprints on the tarry surface of the hill. The oil slopped all around the hole in the earth as he poured it in. He threw the cask after it.

"There's something down there—I saw it!" Dickon gasped, sliding down the hill again with hasty grace:

The earth shook, and a blind white shaft of flesh burst up out of the hole. Too soon! Ruana snatched up the nearest torch and shied it past Dickon's head, praying it would stay lit, would ignite the oil, that a thousand different luck-chances would fall her way.

The cask, balanced on the worm's head, fell. The torch struck its oil-slicked side and set the creature afire in a rush of flame.

She heard the boy and the horse both scream, and perhaps the fear that she should feel would come later in dreams. For now she was here to kill the worm.

It towered up to the sky, a column as big as the body of an ox and glistening with the juices running from its split, seared flesh. Its head was ringed with ruined eyes, and clashing, triangular teeth lined its mouth and throat. It smelled of rotting cheese.

Ruana Rulane ran up the side of the worm-hill, over the new wetness that made her boot soles smoke. She reached the marrow-fat translucence of the body of the worm and cut deep into the leather-over-jelly of it. Slow, grey-white gobbets of ooze began pushing through the widening rip.

The worm wailed—she felt its soundless cry as a lancing pain in her head. It tried to retreat, but even the smooth sides of its tunnel were too painful against its skin. Thrashing blindly, it searched for the source of its agony, slamming its body again and again against the ground outside its nest.

The third time it hit the ground, Ruana jumped to its back. Before it had time to throw her off, she locked her ankles together behind its head and drove her good iron sword into its skull.

The treetops flashed by below her as it reared, carrying her up into the last rays of the setting sun. The sword sank in deep and she began to saw, wondering for a brief moment if she would have done anything so foolhardy as face down a worm alone at eventide if she weren't grieving already about giving up that Duke's bawbee of a glass sword.

Then there was no time to wonder, only to curse, as the pale jelly of the worm foamed up over her gauntlets and began to burn on her skin. Black liquid sprayed out of its mouth and seeped up through the wound she had made;

one of her hair-rings cut her cheek as she was whipped giddily around. And still it would not die.

"Crownking!" she cried, but the Sleeping God did not hear. Furious now, she stabbed and gouged and plunged her hand deep into the acid slime of the worm's body to find something solid to cut that would end its life. Her fingers met around a gut-slippery thickness somewhere inside—she squeezed and, madly, pulled.

Then the pain in her head was blinding, and for an instant she was free of both earth and worm.

It was still dying as she shook her hair out of her eyes—knowing enough, even now, not to touch her face. Her hands closed on emptiness; her sword was gone.

The trees had broken her fall and not her neck. She groped to her feet with a groan. Better than she deserved; how could she have been so stupid?

There were some questions better not asked. She stripped off her half-eaten gloves and looked at the raw red flesh beneath. Water, first, to wash them, then the other cask of oil to save the skin, always assuming the horse that carried it hadn't managed to bolt.

The worm was lying fully extended now, dead and already beginning to rot. Eighteen feet, maybe twenty. A prize specimen . . .

But not big enough to do the damage she'd seen at the farmstead.

She heard a scream—Dickon—and looked up.

A second worm was coming. This one flew.

And she didn't have a sword.

The Crownking, before he slept, had seen fit to put two of every kind of beast into the world, and the worm was no exception. What she was seeing now, Ruana guessed, was a she-worm, and it looked like being the last thing she was going to see. The creature's body bulged and tapered, and wings like rainbow and pond-slick made a haze over its back in the fading twilight.

Find a plan, damme—otherwise you've just wakened the thing to raze the holding again!

Things happened too fast. The buzz of the she-worm's wings filled the air, and Ruana saw the white flash of Dickon's face off to her left. He was terrified, but he was here, and then he grabbed for something and she knew what it must be. She ran toward him, shouting "No!"

The flash of blue fire made her leap back, and for a moment she saw every bone in Dickon's body illuminated like bright day. He drew the god-sword free of the earth before it killed him, and even dead staggered two steps toward her with it, wide eyes blankly white and hair dancing in a spirit-wind from hell.

Ruana Rulane was the Twiceborn, and knew to a nicety the hurt that magic could do. But whatever the sword might do to her now was nothing to what the worm would do—to her and to others. She dragged the sword from the dead child's hands and turned to face the worm.

New strength sang through her body, and she didn't grudge the blood that wept from raw hands onto the hilt of the sword. The hero with the magic sword faced the dragon, and called it in gleeful northland accents to come and die.

But the thing danced on wingtips just out of her reach and slashed at her with its barbed tail. A circle of eyes, glass and mirrors, gave Ruana back a thousand self-images. So she did what she had to, luring it back into the darkness of the trees where it could not use its wings, where her only defense against the vague murderous paleness was Shadowkiss.

No ritual blade this, but a killing engine edged sharper than glass, lighter and stronger than any smith-forged sword. Each time the sword struck it bit ruinously deep; fast and deadly and meant for her hand alone. Ruana butchered the loathy worm in darkness so total she could not be sure when it died, only that it was dead when she staggered away from the body.

There was no moon. She followed the sound of the water to the riverbank and fainted with her hands in the stream.

In her dreams she rode the worm again, and its torso writhed and bucked between her thighs—only to change, dreamlike, to the body of a man who laughed and clasped her and held her close.

"Ruana, Ruana, Ruana Rulane—Rulane the Twice-born!" He sang her name and shimmered away to mist before she could see his face.

"Who are you?" She knew the answer. Demon-dreams, and she too tired to wake. She reached, dreaming, for her sword.

"Name me and I'll tell you! Name me and I'll stay!"

The promise came from nowhere and everywhere. She

bit her lips shut over the name.

She was standing on a misty plain. Shadowkiss was in her hand, sensuous as jade. The light from its gems stained the shrouding fog pink.

"Who am I?" mist-echo demanded.

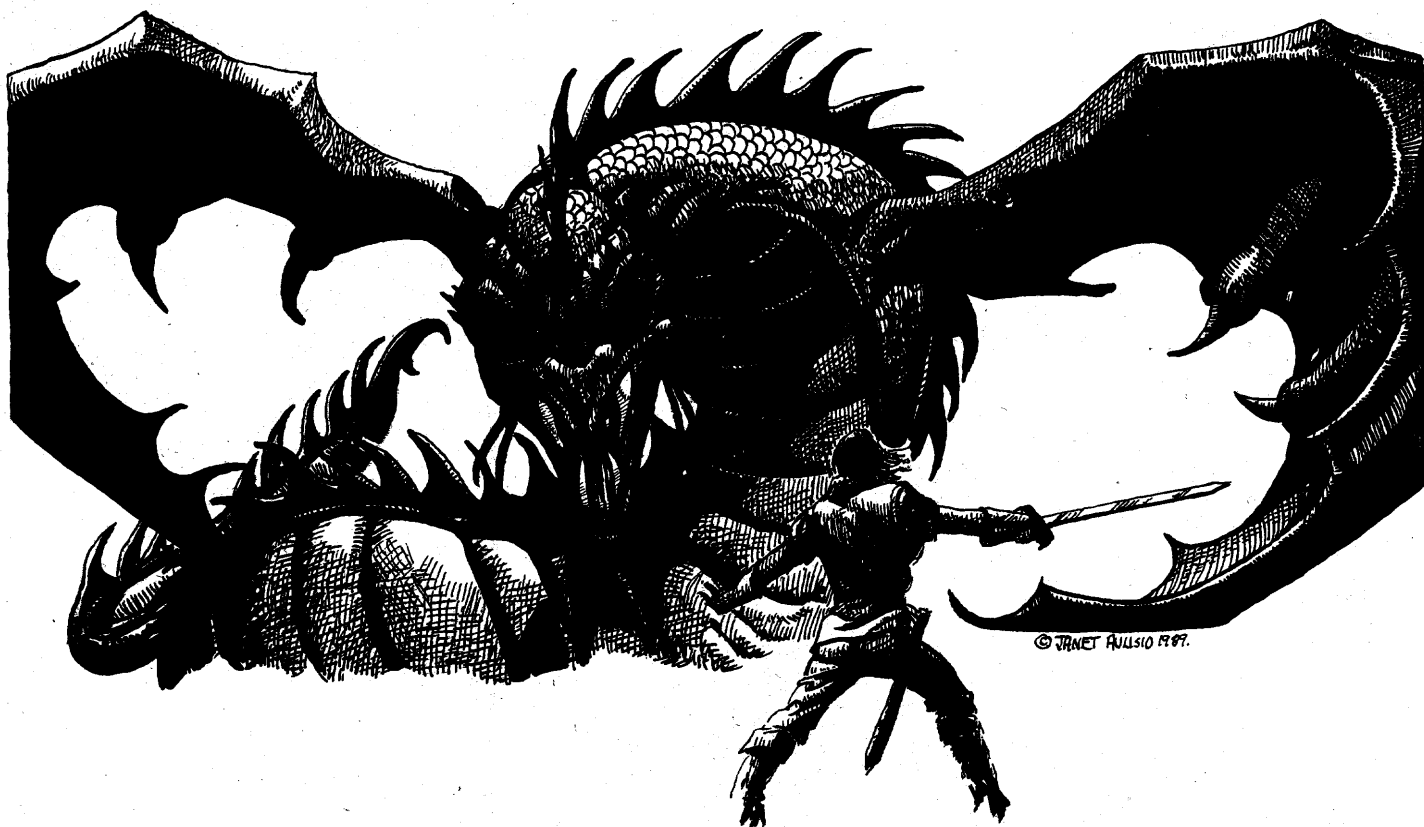
"Where am I?" Ruana countered. *On the edge of heart's desire*, came the inward certainty. Ahead the mist thinned. Rocks appeared; a cave.

She was standing on the wet sand of ebb tide, and as she walked toward the sea-cave her boots made no sound. Once inside she heard the booming rhythm of the surf, and by the glittering salt-blue flame of torches she could see damp-rotted frescoes weeping down the curving walls: Crownking and Starharp, the lesser gods, heroes, ancient kings, and men. Battles and wars in undiscovered countries, and at their center the Starharp waited, to wake the Crownking and play to life new universes.

It glittered on its altar, recurving framework charmed golden out of starlight and strung with a silver purer than any metal. Here was the linchpin of the turning world, waiting only the mortal who would take it up and become the centerpiece of all the gods.

This was what she wanted. This was what drew her, through a life of bad inns, worse food, and no more home than blanket and saddletree. To take the Starharp and do a deed remembered down through the ages, to change the shape of the world.

The other entered the cave behind her. This was the truth, the answer, and the bargain. She could name the other if she chose, and gain . . .



A hero's sword for a true hero, chosen of the gods to be the herald of a new age. A lover for her love, and the promise that everything she had done to reach this place was justified and paid for, burnished right and inevitable and necessary.

She lowered the swordpoint to the sand. She did not need the outward symbol now.

"Ruana," said the other, shadow of her self. Arms, embraced her from behind, and on their hands' fingers were green glass rings set with rubies.

"Name me," said her shadow, and in the words echoed every consequence of her actions. The Starharp filled her eyes with gold and silver light.

Loved. Worshiped. Glorified. Avenged.

"You killed the boy."

For a moment it seemed even the Starharp glowed less bright.

"It is my nature. Soon all will know our legend, and no one from the lowliest peasant to the highest lord will dare to lay hands on the sword of the Twiceborn. Do not set one unimportant boy against that. Do not shame me. I have waited for you since the universe was made; together we are complete. With me you take up a mad god's curse and a glorious destiny; to play the Starharp and bring order to all the worlds. Ruana. Beloved."

And all at the cost of one unimportant boy. Take the sword—or decide that some glory asked too high a price.

Ruana Rulane made her choice.

"Name me."

"Shadowkiss."

She woke in the morning to river mist that convinced her she still slept, to larksong that was no respecter of dragons, to a splitting head and blistered hands and an empty belly. Her back hurt.

She was glad to be alive.

The horse was dead. The worm and its mate were nothing now but odd bone barbs.

The boy Dickon was a featherweight in her arms. She took him back to the freehold and told the survivors the tale—that she and the freeholder's son between them had slain the dragon and its mate, and that now the woods and fields were safe. The crofters gave her bandages for her hands and a share in their breakfast. They gave the hero's sword a reverent distance, and buried the boy in the stableyard where the stones could easily be taken up. Ruana left before they were done.

Midday on foot she found a ford and then began the laborious process of finding the main road again.

Shadowkiss was wrapped in blanket scraps and slung over her shoulder. The Grey Duke had sent his men for the sword, and Ruana had told them she would take it to his priests. And so she would, but now it seemed she would take it to the duke as well—and farther. It was an inconvenient fact of life that the future seemed to hold killing and maybe imprisonment and certainly the disappointment of a powerful overlord in the matter of the god-sword Shadowkiss. The duke would certainly want what he considered his, and she had no intention of giving it to him.

Her muscles protested the unaccustomed exercise, and

her horseman's boots weren't meant for walking. It was something of a relief when the Grey Duke's soldiers showed up.

They surrounded her with nocked arrows and conspicuous amulets, and one or two made the sign against magic. She eased her pack and saddle to the ground while a fat priest on a fat mule blew smoke and ash toward her out of a dish. A terrified acolyte dashed up to souse her with flower water.

She shook it out of her eyes with a curse and drew the sword. It sliced through the bindings of its improvised scabbard and flashed all the colors of ocean in the sun.

She could see each move she would make in her mind. It did not matter that the soldiers were six. First the man slain to gain her a mount, then the others dead from horseback, then the priest, left gutted and handless alive for the rooks, to warn his gods their freedom's end was coming.

So simple.

"Take the sword!" The priest's voice was cross but not yet frightened.

"You!" she shouted back. "Get you down; I've no mind to walk to the city."

The duke's men stared. Shadowkiss keened its disappointment in a voice only she could hear. Ruana filled her lungs and spoke again.

"Listen, my callants. Your duke will want to know what's kept you so long on the road. Do you want him having the chanter's way of it only? You're sworn to take this sword to him and I'll not stop you—so get that useless noise off his beast and we'll be off." The soldiers looked at one another. One of them smiled and the others laughed.

"And look you mind the sword," she said, as the captain started toward the priest. "Happen it kills heroes, too."

Her feet were tied beneath the belly of the mule and the captain led it. After the first day they got her a horse.

On the third day they gave her a scabbard to lit the sword, and her feet were untied.

On the sixth day they entered Corchado.

It was not the largest city for priests, or the biggest for markets, but it was the city you must take to take the South. Somewhere farther down the road they spoke of this as the northland, and even there they spoke of Corchado. It was built on a hill made of the broken stones of enemy cities, and enemy bones were mortared into the bricks of its walls.

The soldiers brought her through the town, and she brandished what she carried for all to see. Shadowkiss urged her to find the way to Ocean, where the Starharp waited and the Crownking slept. It forgave her betrayal and loved her again, dreaming and promising her destiny. Ruana had never seen the ocean nor spoken to anyone who had. The way to Ocean would be a journey through legend.

The castle porticullis closed behind her. The sword was in its sheath, and her hand was on her sword hilt as she dismounted. There was an inevitability about the situation it was hard not to admire. The duke wanted the sword, to which he had only a tentative claim at best. Ruana had a

better one, but things being what they were, the moment she enforced it people would die. She had no faith in the healing power of common sense. She had come because she was no sneak thief, and because she had said she would, but against that waited the arrogance of princes, pat and foolish as a singer's tale.

Eight men in gilded plate armor presented themselves in the courtyard. Their captain was in plumes and scarlet. Shadowkiss foretold their deaths and Ruana waited for them to demand the sword she carried.

But they didn't.

"You're to come with me, Rulane Twiceborn. The Duke will see you."

The parade-captain looked at Ruana.

Not so much older than an unimportant boy.

Ruana took her hand from the sword hilt. This time it was harder.

The captain closed the door behind her. The room held one man.

Now Ruana drew the sword. In the dim room it gathered all the light and gave back color brighter than the tapestries. The Duke looked up. He stood at the tall desk by the window, turning the pages of a book with jewelled covers.

"Is this what you sent for, my fine one?" Ruana asked.

His eyes were a little darker than amber, his hair already streaked with grey.

"Apparently," he said. "Will you give it to me?"

Begin here, and set the terms for a thousand years of war, because the sword Shadowkiss is invincible and the companion it has chosen will live until the end of the world. Ruana had carried the sword for a week and she knew. She could not give it up, or allow it to be taken from her, or destroy it, or let it be 'destroyed while she lived. And if somehow she were killed, the sword in fury and grief would take a new lover, and the killing would not end.

Elegant. Precise. A chain reaction begun when sword chose companion; inevitable, predictable, and infinitely repeatable as long as there were honor and glory and a desire to be . . .

A hero.

"Your soldiers did all you told them, but you should have gone yourself. The sword's not for you, nor ever will be."

The Duke closed the book and stepped forward. He wore no armor and his hands were empty.

"The sword is for no one. Do you know why I wanted it, Rulane Twiceborn? I wanted it to bury far beneath my castle where it would never see the sun, where no man would touch it and die—or touch it and live." He took another step forward, and another, and now Ruana could smell the oils and spices of him, see the grace notes of power in the ivory fold of linen and the rich glow of the wool that he wore.

"Since before the universe was born," the Duke said slowly, "Shadowkiss has waited to take a companion. It is powerless without one; that is its nature. It was forged to fight the final battle of ancient gods, and those who made it wrought cruel as the grave and more cunning than Death. It is a living thing; the legends say it dreams.

When I heard it was in the land, I sent for it—"

"To bury it. Aye, and if it's what you say, that'd solve your fine muddle—until your son's time, or your grandson's. Or did you think no one would ever know about the god-sword with Corchado sitting on it? Armies have marched for less."

Ruana lowered the sword slowly until its point touched the floor. It glowed bright enough to cast shadows on the stone and light the desperation on the face of the Duke.

"Even a lifetime is more than the world will have if you leave this room alive. Help me slay the sword. If there is any chance that I am right, will you take the chance that I am wrong?"

"I'd sooner spin flax into gold than try to find the truth in a prophecy. Or a prince. And I'm mortal fond of taking chances."

The lines in the Duke's face were deeper now, but he smiled wearily. "I am too late, then. Whatever you've come to do, Twiceborn, try. I've had time to prepare. If you manage to get out of here alive I promise you a war such as the world has never seen. But tell me first: What has it promised you?"

A name. A song. Glory to outlast life and deeds to change the world.

"Never your mind. But I'll tell you this: your chanter's nonsense is a thought right, a grand name-calling, and proudful. You say my sword lives. You're right. But what is yon sleekit thing but a bairn, with a bairn's temper and a sharper edge? It wants its own way, that's all, and no thought to afterwards or anyone else. But living things learn. There won't be war for Shadowkiss this spring or any other. I'll see to that."

She flipped the sword back into its sheath and rested her hand on the pommel. The effort it cost her was not visible for anyone to see.

"Are you saying you can control it? You're mad. It will make you serve it."

"How? Would I be here if I couldn't control the sword—or would I be off waiting for you to bring me a pretty war to pass the time, all banners and causes and bad cess to you for a fool?"

Shadowkiss whipped her blood to icefire and music, but it had lost, and now it knew it. It had bound itself to Ruana Rulane without discovering she-held a child's life as important as a kingdom, and that all the glittering, well-tried gifts in its armory of illusion had no power over her.

"Make up your own mind, Duke. If you can't believe me, best try to kill me now. But I don't lie. And happen there's work for a blade like this—you've got worm on your north, did you know?"

Vengeance and power, love, glory, and renown—

"I—What did you say?"

He'd thought he had only two choices. Kill Rulane Twiceborn and hide the hellblade . . . for a time. Or failing that, plunge the country into war that spread until no one remembered why he fought.

But there was a third choice. Trust a hero.

"Worm," Ruana repeated with amused patience. "You call it dragon, but it'll blight a field just as fast whatever its name is."

The Grey Duke looked down at his hands as if he could not imagine their uses. Then he looked at the hero.

"Well. Worms. I can see that requires my immediate attention. Will you use Shadowkiss in my service, then, Rulane Twiceborn?"

She shook her head in a clatter of ornaments and smiled slightly. "Happen you might think so, but you'll be wrong. I'll use it for what's right, and kind, and mannerly. If you'll settle for that, well enough, and I'll be glad to stay."

The Duke looked at her, measuring, and slowly smiled. She did not kneel, or offer to.

"Why not? Very well. Stay with me. I'll give you anything you ask beside. Even, as they say, unto half my lands."

"Oh, aye, as to that, I'm no thief either, and it's peculiar manners you must have in the south, my hinny. A horse and a bed will do me. Kingdoms are a nuisance, and I've already got a sword." The hero smiled again with acceptance and regret. "And my destiny."

Once there were gods, and of their legacy one last touchstone remained. There was only one thing it knew how to do, and in its particular innocence it could not imagine anything beyond that.

Now it would learn.

She had wanted the Starharp, and the glory of it was within her grasp. She wanted her own way, and with Shadowkiss she would be invincible.

Heroes are inconvenient. They have no sense of proportion. Over glory or freedom Ruana Rulane chose instead the peculiar conceit that you did not have to be a hero to matter, but because she was a hero she took up the sword anyway, knowing that for the rest of her life she would have to set her will against that of Shadowkiss every waking hour.

Even though she loved it.

It was heroism, though not the sort that makes legends. In a way, Ruana had been made for one task just as the sword had.

It loved its companion. That was its nature. Even now, it would not betray her. Shadowkiss was bound. There would be world and time, and no escape. Ever.

Trapped through all the long nights and the empty days to come. Without battle, without war, without any sort or kind of glory—shackled forever to the useless hollow business of work, and duty, and responsibility.

For an unimportant boy. For the heresy that bread was preferable to destiny, and kindness to high drama. For the knowledge that childhood ends, and that in the end even gifts must be paid for.

To every seduction it could offer, Ruana Rulane the Twiceborn would ask "Why?" and proud love would compel Shadowkiss to answer, and know its answers scorned. Until in the end it had no more answers, and no more belief in the bright beauty of war.

And the sword wept.

Ω

Sage Advice

Continued from page 12

are not multiplied (see the *DMG*, page 165). In general, bonuses due to strength or magic are not multiplied unless the item's or attack form's description specifically says that they are.

Does the +3 bonus of a giant *slaying* sword also apply to all the giant-class opponents listed on page 22 of *Unearthed Arcana*? How can short creatures such as tasloi and goblins be considered giant class?

The bonus applies only against creatures of the giant class that are ogre-sized or larger. You may want to limit the bonus only to those creatures listed in the *DMG* in order to avoid ambiguity. All of the creatures listed on page 22 of *Unearthed Arcana* are related to one another in some fashion, as careful reading of the individual monster descriptions will show. Stat-ure is not the only requirement for the "giant" class; preferred terrain; languages, living habits, anatomy, and blood relationships are also factors.

How many "pluses" can a sword or

other magical weapon have?

We recommend that the absolute maximum be + 6, and this should be very rare, perhaps limited to artifacts.

Must a character be of lawful alignment to use a *vorpal* weapon?

Yes, if the sword is to be used without penalty. As page 165 of the *DMG* states, all *vorpal weapons* are lawfully aligned. *Vorpal weapons* can, however, be good, neutral, or evil as well as lawful.

Potions

Could a human or half-orc character of young-adult age become a small child or infant if he drinks a potion of longevity? If so, will magical aging reverse the process? Can an illusionist provide magical aging, as with an illusory ghost?

The imbibor of a potion of longevity grows 1-12 years younger both physically and mentally. Whether or not a character reduced to childhood actually turns into a child is up to your DM. The character will have a child's statistics, in any event, if reduced to a child's age (see the *DMG*, page 126).

Magical aging of *any* sort will increase

the character's physical and mental age, whether or not his age has been previously reduced in some manner. Ghosts, *haste* spells, and the like will age the character.

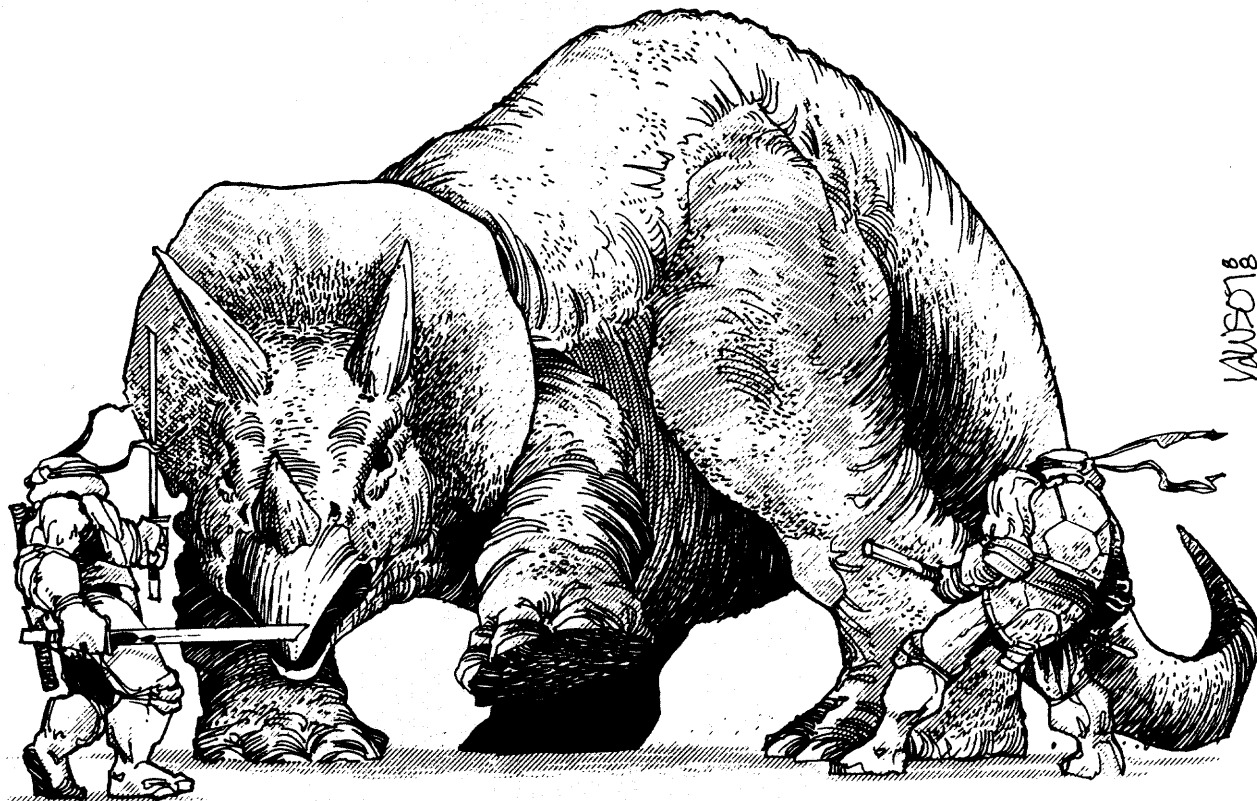
The exact effect of an illusion on character age is another can of worms entirely. While a real ghost could negate the potion's effects, an illusory ghost can only effect an illusory increase in age—that is, the character *thinks* he has regained his maturity, but he actually has not. The character will think he can do anything he could do before, but he only has the abilities of a younger person—possibly those of a child. How long the illusion lasts is up to your DM. Note that for real effects, one of the *shadow monster* spells must be used to create quasi-real creatures.

Ω

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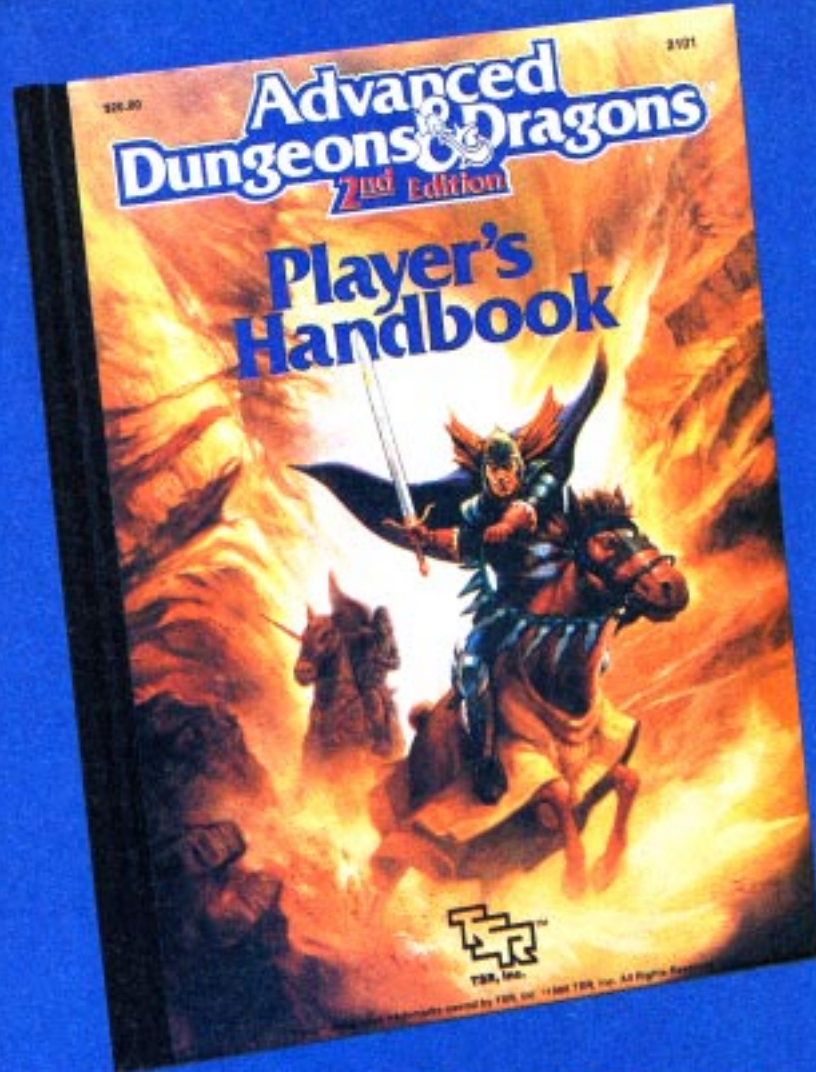
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Morning EDITION

Aunt May: Threat or menace?

This month, we present more questions and answers for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® Advanced Set game, courtesy of our all-knowing sage. Our first question concerns the battle of the century — between Galactus and who?



I have a problem with Karma use. I mean, for 100 points of Karma (or less), you can get any special result you want. Heck, Aunt May, wielding a kitchen knife, could spend 100 Karma points and get a Kill result on Galactus! Shouldn't Karma use be limited to just hitting or missing?

While it is theoretically possible for Aunt May to spend 100 Karma points and get a Kill result on Galactus, such an event is, as a practical matter, impossible in a well-run game. In your example, Galactus would be killed only if Aunt May's attack gets through Galactus's Body Armor, and then only if Galactus fails a Class 1000 Endurance check (and Galactus also can opt to spend Karma to pass the Endurance check). Furthermore, sweet old Aunt May is in no position to collect 100 Karma points in the first place.

The introductions in module ME1 *Cosmos Cubed* and in several other modules say that you should use the Advanced Set Judge's Book for PC statistics. However, I own several products with different - and more recent - statistics. I'd like to use these statistics, but my players object.

According to MARVEL SUPER HEROES game designer Jeff Grubb, most modules suggest using statistics in the Advanced Set Judge's Book only because it is assumed that every serious MARVEL SUPER HEROES game referee owns the Advanced Set. So, feel free to use the most recent statistics you have. If the play balance in a module depends on a specific set of statistics, these statistics will be given in the module.

A character generated in my campaign can cast Eldritch Bolts. How are Body Armor, Force Fields, Body Resistance, and other defensive powers affected by Eldritch Bolts? Is magical Body Armor the only protection that works against this power?

The answer to your question depends on the type of Eldritch Bolt being used (see MHAC9 *Realms of Magic*, Manual of Magic, page 19). For example, Body Armor is effective only against Impact Bolts, and general force fields (like the one Sue

Richards has) are effective against all bolts. For more information on types of force fields, see MA3 *The Ultimate Powers Book*, page 17.

Which table is used for power ranges — the one in the Advanced Set Players' Book, page 16, or the one on page 26 of the same book?

The table on page 16 is for power range. The table on page 26 is for thrown objects. Use the former.

How do you determine a generated character's Resource Rank?

Resources are a secondary ability; see page 7 of the Advanced Set Players' Book. Note that this is the only ability which may be changed for new characters, using the Ability Modifier Table on page 6 of the same book.

When is the next *Gamer's Handbook of the Marvel Universe*™ coming out?

MU4 (TSR product #6884) is available now. MU5 (#6887) is due out in October (see the next question).

Please send me the new statistics for my favorite character, [name given], now that his/her/its most recent epic adventures in the comics have made the game statistics for him/her/it obsolete. And why was my favorite character and/or favorite ruthless villain left out of the *Gamer's Handbook of the Marvel Universe*?

Marvel Super Heroes change all the time, and we update them whenever practical, but only in products or in this column — we cannot send you their statistics. Space limitations and a few errors kept some characters out of the current *Gamer's Handbooks*. The fifth *Gamer's Handbook* will contain any characters that were missed in the first four volumes, and will list characters who have changed or made their debut after the previous volumes were released. Additional *Gamer's Handbooks* might be released from time to time as more old characters change and new characters appear.

When two characters attempt a combined FEAT, the rules say that the character with the higher ability or power score gets a + 1CS to the FEAT roll. Is the + 1CS still given if the two characters have the same score?

Yes, two characters with the same ability rank still get the + 1CS when attempting a combined FEAT.

The descriptions of the Limb, Organ, and Exoskeleton Cyborgs in *The Ultimate Powers Book* do not say what column to use when generating abilities on the Random Ranks table.

The Cyborgs roll on column 1.

My players and I are having trouble keeping track of flying characters during our games.

Try keeping a paper record of each flying character's exact altitude. Putting the figure or cutout on a six-sided die will help remind everyone that the character is flying.

Exactly what does the Luck Manipulation power let a character do?

To my knowledge, there is no power called Luck Manipulation. However, the second addenda to *The Ultimate Powers Book* (in DRAGON® issue #134) lists a power called Probability Control, which is probably what you're looking for. (The first addenda appeared in DRAGON issue #122).

The rules say that a foe's Karma value depends on his or her highest ability score. If a hero arrests or defeats a supercriminal who has an Invulnerability power, would the criminal be worth 1,000 Karma points?

No. Generally, only offensive powers are considered when calculating a foe's Karma value. However, the Judge might rule that a powerful defensive ability makes a foe a serious threat. This must be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, Invulnerability, since it only works against one particular thing, is too limited a power to be considered in a foe's Karma value.

Why don't characters like Tigra, Sabretooth, and Spider-Man have higher Intuition scores? These characters have extremely powerful reflexes and senses.

Intuition depends on more than acute senses and fast reflexes, although they do help (hence Spider-Man's Amazing combat sense). To have a very high Intuition score, a character must have a strong will, excellent deductive powers, common sense, quick wits, and great reflexes. If one or more of these is lacking, the character's Intuition score suffers.

How can I get more maps for my game without buying a whole new module or boxed set?

Extra parts are available from TSR, Inc. Send requests for extra parts to:

The Mail Order Hobby Shop
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Lake Geneva WI 53147

The minimum charge is \$5.00. When ordering spare parts, be sure to include the TSR product number for the product that contains the part you want. Look for each number on the product's cover or box top.

Is a FEAT roll needed when a character tries to use his full movement?

No. Any character can automatically move his full movement every round but can do nothing else (except make a charging attack, as per the Advanced Set Players' Book, page 27).

The rules say that AP (armor-piercing) shot reduces Body Armor by two ranks. Is this permanent? Does it cause any extra damage?

There is no permanent reduction and no damage increase. AP shot affects a target as though its Body Armor is two ranks less than it actually is. This simply means that the armor absorbs less damage when AP shot hits it, but the shot does not do any extra damage.

How is a Power Stunt established? What is the Karma cost for using an established stunt?

A Power Stunt becomes established after it is tried ten times. Once established, no Karma need be spent to use the stunt.

Why was the Resource system changed? The new system doesn't work. There are times when Tony Stark can't even buy a pen!

A quick rereading of the Resource FEAT section in the Advanced Set Players' Book, pages 18-19, shows that Tony Stark always

can buy a pen (it's an automatic FEAT). Still, Tony Stark's Resources rank is probably underrated (the Advanced Set listing reflects his period as an alcoholic). Tony Stark's Resources rank probably should be Incredible now that he is running Stark Enterprises again.

I have a problem player in my group. Every character he plays winds up dead. He doesn't seem to do it on purpose, but his accidental hero-slaughtering is a real pain.

This is a problem for the Judge and for the group. If the player is simply unlucky, the Judge can give him a break from time to time, but not so often as to give the player an unfair advantage over the others. Or you can do nothing and hope the player's luck will change. If the player makes bad decisions, try to politely give him some advice and help him avoid repeating his worst mistakes — he'll probably enjoy the game more if you help him play better. If the player is simply being inattentive or careless, tell him to take the game more seriously or clear out. The Judge and the players should do all they can to help each other enjoy the game and to feel welcome, but an incorrigibly uninterested player just spoils the game for everybody else.

When a villain attacks a group of

PCs, how do you decide which character gets attacked?

Most villains attack the hero who is considered to be the biggest threat to them. This can be a common-sense decision or it can be an emotional one based on the villain's fears and dislikes. For example, Scorpion always attacks Spider-Man first. Very smart villains (such as Doctor Doom) try to incapacitate one hero quickly to even the odds.

I'm having problems finding all the locations in the MHSP2 *Secret Wars II* module. Is there supposed to be more than one map?

The *Secret Wars II* module contains one map, printed on both sides. If you have the correct map but are still having trouble finding things, double check the text — some encounters might refer to the maps in the Basic or Advanced Sets. Ω

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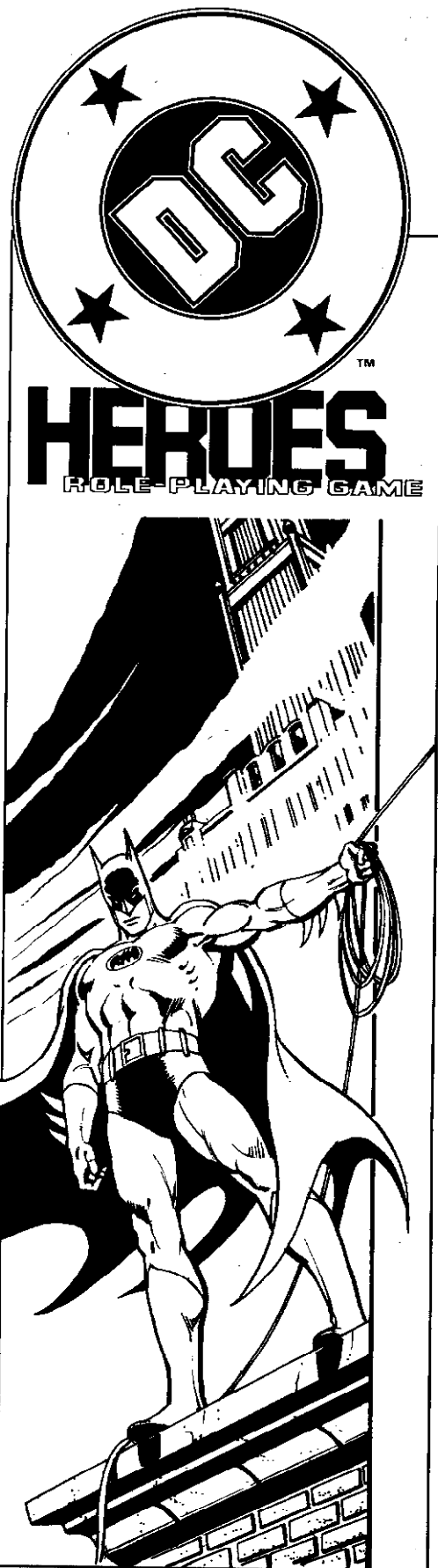
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by Dan Salas

Dangerous Terrain



Mutants aren't your only foes in the GAMMA WORLD® game

in the 25th century world of the GAMMA WORLD® game, life is short and brutal. Only strong and well-equipped player characters have much chance of survival unless surrounded by the cushion of an organized society. Yet most of the usual dangers found in the game come from nonplayer characters, monsters, and an occasional Cryptic Alliance. What about the hazards of everyday life? Aren't there other reminders of the Social Wars than those mentioned above?

This article describes the terrain hazards which threaten the everyday existence of the Gamma Worlds inhabitants. In addition to the random encounter checks made for monsters, given in the third-edition game Master's screen under Random Events, the Game Master should check for the random hazards outlined in Table in this article.

The chance of a hazard encounter is 10% per four hours of overland movement, herein referred to as a March Turn, using the second-edition GAMMA WORLD game's terminology. A Search Turn is 10 minutes long, and an Action Turn is 10 seconds long (see pages 24-25 in the second-edition Basic Rules Booklet, and page 13 in the third-edition Rule Book).

Illustration by Mark Nelson

Details on the tables

Radiation zone: This zone is an area of continuous radioactivity. Fields are 1-6 miles in diameter; they give off Intensity 3-6 radiation per March Turn. Craters are 100-600' in diameter and give off Intensity 2-12 radiation per Search Turn. Pools are water-filled craters, 10-100' in diameter, and cause Intensity 3-18 radiation damage to anyone who takes a drink.

Sometimes (40% of fields, 20% of craters, and 10% of pools) these zones present obvious signs of their radioactivity. These signs include a total absence of unmutated plant life or an unusual number of skeletons in the area. High-intensity areas (levels 14 +) might even give off a faint green glow at night.

Additionally, many species of mutated organisms can survive in a radiation zone; some actually thrive in it. Their presence can be a signal to the presence of radiation. More importantly, PCs may be alerted by the presence of Radioactivists in a nomad camp or shrine. Table 2 outlines the types of encounters possible. Roll 1d20 once for a pool, twice for a crater, or once per mile in a field.

Unstable energy cell: This forgotten power source lies half-buried in the ground, though it can be found by normal search activities. If handled, the energy cell reacts in the manner of its type: atomic cells give off Intensity 3-6 radiation per hour to a 50'-radius area, while the other types each have a 25% chance of exploding. Chemical cells spray acid for 3-18 points of damage to anyone with 20'; hydrogen cells explode in flames, causing 2-20 points of damage to anyone with 20'.

An unstable energy cell cannot be recovered for use. Anyone who tampers with it takes radiation damage or risks an explosion as described above.

Robot: Randomly encountered robots are usually immobile and occasionally (25% chance) are partially buried underground and difficult to see. However, 50% of wild and killer robots wander freely about the countryside.

Nonfunctional robots come in three types: junk, salvageable, and revivable. Junk robots are little more than rusted heaps of metal and serve only to frighten travelers. Salvageable robots don't have enough undamaged parts to become functional, but can be stripped of parts and weapons (each piece has a 20% chance of being usable). Revivable robots can become operational in the hands of any PC who is skilled at working on robots.

Wild robots are described on page 56 in the second-edition Basic Rules Booklet, and on page 60 in the third-edition Rule Book.

Guardian robots are stationary and react to Pure Strain Humans and humanoids. The "intruders" are required to show an I.D. of Stage II (40%), III (30%), IV (20%), or V (10%). Otherwise the robot will demand that the PCs turn back the way they came. The consequences of refusal are made

obvious by the robot's weaponry. Occasionally, a robot in an uncivilized area guards the entrance to an underground facility or military installation of the Ancients.

Killer robots react violently to any life forms that they detect. These robots fight only in self-defense against all other types of robots. If not programmed by currently active Cryptic Alliances or individuals, such robots are acting on programming from the Ancients or have been damaged and are behaving irrationally.

Land mine: There is a 40% chance that an unfortunate PC (randomly chosen from the group) has stepped on a weapon which reacts to pressure release. Once the pressure from the PC lifts, the weapon explodes and causes damage equal to the grenade of the same type as listed in the table. There is a 30% chance that the device simply explodes when stepped on, and a 30% chance that it malfunctions and fails to explode.

If he steps on the mine but it doesn't immediately explode, the victim can make a check versus IN X 5 to notice the weapon before detonating it. Other PCs can then attempt to figure out and thus disarm the mine, but risk damage to themselves as well as the one who triggered it.

Poison zone: Gas poison zones indicate a chemical leak producing a 10'- to 40'-diameter gas cloud. Perhaps the leak comes from a rusted metal container or a damaged gas grenade. The poison causes damage of Intensity 3-18 per Action Turn to all PCs in the poison zone. The poison effects the skin as well as the lungs, so PCs cannot avoid damage by simply holding their breaths or wearing gas masks.

Liquid poison zones occur in pools (85%) or small flowing streams (15%). A drink from the liquid causes damage of Intensity 11-18. The liquid only occasionally (20% chance) seems like pure water, and then the zone is often accompanied by the

skeletons of small animals or an unfortunate traveler. Otherwise, the liquid smells bad or looks unusual, perhaps having a strange color or texture.

Additional hazards

Some extra details can be added by the Game Master to prevent a boring repeti-

Table 1
Random
Hazard Generation

1d100	Encounter Radiation zone
1-10	Field
11-20	Crater
21-25	Pool
	Unstable energy cell
26-28	Atomic
29-31	Chemical
32-34	Hydrogen
	Robot
35-36	General household robot
37-39	Ecology bot — agricultural
40-43	Ecology bot — wilderness
44-46	Light cargo lifter
47-48	Medical robot
49-52	Security robot
53-54	Defense borg
55	Warbot
	Land mine
56-65	Fragment
66-68	Chemex
69-70	Energy
	Poison zone
71-75	Gas
76-85	Liquid
86-00	No terrain encounter

Modifiers:

Civilized area	+15
Deathlands	-15

Table 2
Radiation Zone Encounters

Creature encountered	Pool (1d20)	Crater (1d20)	Field (1d20)
Blaash	1-2	1-2	1
Blight	3-4	3-4	2
Blood Bird	5	5	3
Gator	6-8	—	—
Kai Lin	9-10	6-7	4-5
Obb	11-12	8-10	6
Perth	13-15	—	—
Radioactivists*	16-17	11	7-8
Radiation pool	—	—	9-11**
No encounter	18-20	12-20	12-20

* Encounter will be with a nomad camp of 1d6 + 12 individuals (15%), 1-3 scouts (35%; Seniors, as per page 3 of the third-edition Rules Supplement), or unoccupied shrine (50%).

* * Roll again on the Pool column for inhabitants.

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Table 3
Robot Condition
and Function

1d20	Condition & function
1-9	Nonfunctional, junk
10-11	Nonfunctional, salvageable
12	Nonfunctional, revivable
13-15	Functional, wild
16-17	Functional, guardian
18	Functional, killer of humanoids *
19	Functional, killer of Pure Strain Humans *
20	Functional, killer of humanoids and Pure Strain Humans *

* There is a 75% chance that the robot was programmed for this purpose by an evil individual or Cryptic Alliance.

Modifiers:

Civilized area	- 5
Noncombative robot	- 5
Security robot	- 3
Warbot	+1

tion of encounters. For example, an unstable energy cell can be part of a revivable Combat tank, and the cell will explode if the ignition is activated. Or maybe a land mine is one of two dozen mines in an area the PCs have entered. Perhaps a poison stream flows from an ancient factory building full of equipment, worker robots, and toxic chemicals.

Characters can be lured into a hazard, rather than just blundering into it. The simplest lures are artifacts and equipment in the danger zone. A radiation field is a perfect spot for ancient buildings and artifacts. Or maybe there is a gas leak at the entrance to an underground facility.

Another lure can be a group of crossbow-firing Badders who ambush the PCs, hoping to draw them into a mine field!

A rescue mission is a good addition to an encounter. Perhaps a small child, teenager, elderly being, or the like has wandered into a radiation field. Maybe someone's baby has crawled through a mine field and is now making mudpies while surrounded by dozens of chemex explosives. A killer security robot might rampage through a helpless farming community. The adventuring lure will be hard for the PCs to resist.

Whatever the problem, it is possible for the settlement's leaders to offer rewards to the rescuing PCs. The rewards depend on the risk involved and the relative worth of the pet-son in trouble (babies, children, and important officials have high worth, while village idiots, criminals, and unknown strangers have little worth). Rewards might include boosts to Status, gold, equipment, artifacts, or important information.

Any combination of hazards is possible. Even as the PCs face encounters from modules in the GAMMA WORLD game, adding these terrain hazards insures that the players are constantly challenged by the Gamma World.

Ω

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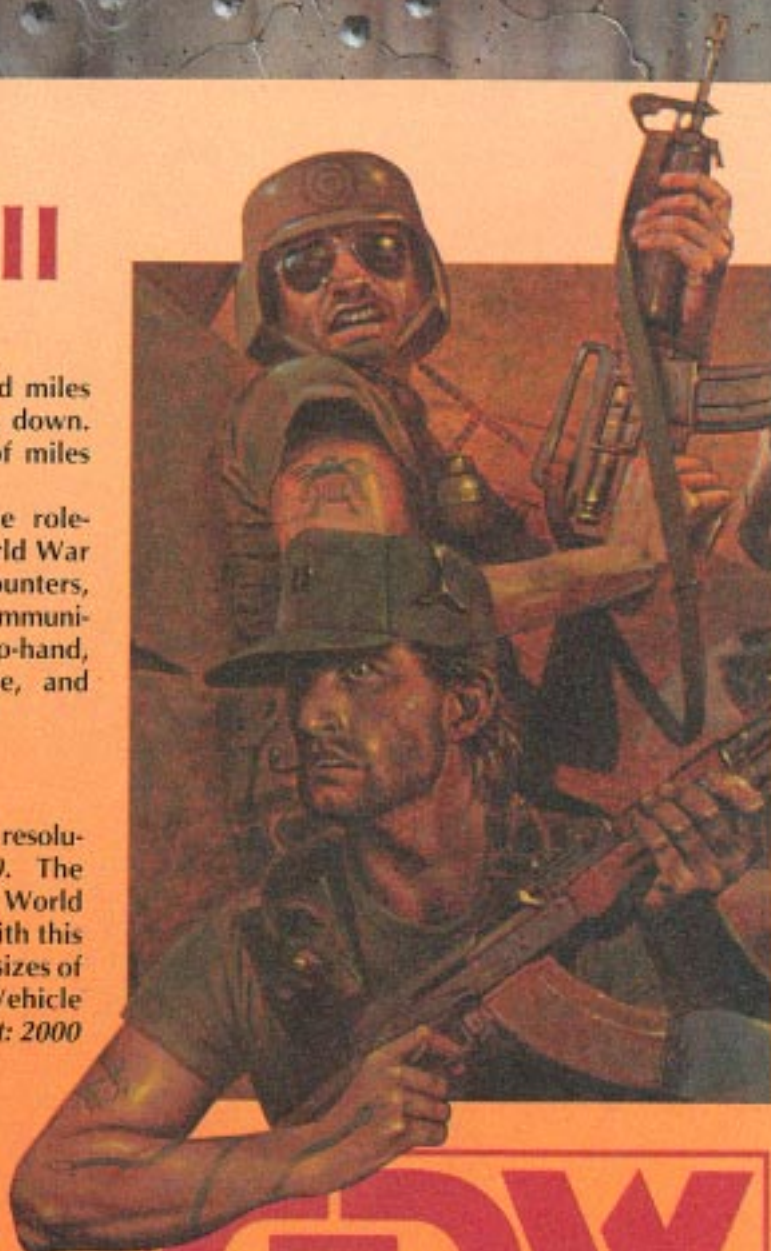
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Might and Magic II: Gates to Another World ****

Apple II version \$49.95

The highly talented folk at New World Computing have once again developed a most entertaining fantasy role-playing adventure game. Arriving on three double-sided 5¼" diskettes (in the Apple II version), *Might and Magic II* takes you on an epic quest to halt the spread of Chaos through the land of Cron. There are hundreds of different adventures, during which you'll encounter more than 250 monsters, all animated onscreen. Against these beasts, your adventuring party can use any of 250 weapons and 96 spells (48 clerical and 48 sorcerer).

When the game begins, you enter Cron in the 10th century. No longer is law and order the foundation of life. Sorcery and swords now hold sway, and monsters roam the land at will. You'll travel backward and forward through time, so be advised that some of the folk you meet and places you visit exist only at certain times and not "elsewhen."

One of the game's new features is its auto-mapping capability. Once one of your characters possesses the new skill of Cartography (map making), you'll find that the program continually displays where you've been and indicates where you're heading. The area displayed is a 16 × 16 grid. Don't think that this relieves you of hand mapping, though. Once you leave a particular area, the map is no longer visible. You should copy all maps onto graph paper as you travel. It's nice to know where you've come from, just in case retreat is required for survival. The New World Computing game masters have also included a colorful and highly detailed 17" X 13" color fold-out map that is enormously helpful when traveling from locale to locale.

Might and Magic II allows you to import characters from other games, including *Might and Magic I*. You needn't have ever played *Might and Magic I* to use this latter capability. However, before attempting this character transfer, you should make a copy of disk B from *Might and Magic I* so that your original characters will remain

as you remember them, before they are afflicted by the evils found in *Might and Magic II*.

Might and Magic II requires that you copy each of the disks except disk A. Unfortunately, Disk A is copy protected and is required to start the game. Disks C, D, E, and F are constantly used throughout the game, and copying their data assures that you'll always have the originals available to you. We also found it to be a good idea to copy your copy of disk B (the disk on which your characters are saved) after each game session. Double backup of characters is a habit all software gamers should acquire.

You can create your own characters or use the ones programmed by New World Computing. Each character has seven attributes:

Might: the character's strength, which determines the damage he or she can inflict in battle;

Intellect: the general knowledge of your character, especially critical to those with sorcerer capabilities;

Personality: the area where clerics need to garner high points;

Endurance: battle stamina that affects a character's hit points;

Speed: probably one of the most critical attributes, as it increases his odds of striking first in battle (and you will definitely need to strike first!);

Accuracy: your character's ability to deliver a damaging blow to the enemy; and

Luck: a purely random attribute that is counted when all else has failed.

Values for each statistic range from 3 to 21, although the 21 was a stranger to our rolls. As you roll your statistics, bear in mind the sort of character you are trying to develop:

Knight: This character has the best fighting skills of any class and can use any weapon or armor. In order to be a knight, you must role a 15 or greater in Might.

Paladin: This character has decent general fighting skills but cannot use missile weapons in hand-to-hand combat. The paladin gains clerical spells at higher levels of experience. A paladin's prime statistics require a roll of 13 or greater in Might, Personality, and Endurance.

Archer: You must obtain one of these fine warriors, as he gains sorcery spells at higher experience levels and can use missile weapons during hand-to-hand combat. An archer must have a roll of 13 or better in both Intellect and Accuracy.

Cleric: The party's healer, the cleric can also be an effective fighter, although he or she is restricted in the type of weapons that can be wielded. A cleric must roll a 13 or greater in Personality.

Sorcerer: With Intellect as the prime requisite, requiring a 13 or greater roll, the sorcerer should remain behind the others of your adventuring party. Sorcerers have pitiful fighting ability with weapons, but watch out for their offensive



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spells!

Robber: Requiring a 13 or better roll in Luck, the robber can also backstab quite effectively, pick locks, and find traps. Unfortunately, even though we managed to build up our robber to 7th level, he remained fairly ineffective in disarming the trapped chests found after slaying hordes of monsters. The success ratio was approximately 1-in-5, and at his level, he should have done better. Our cleric was continuously bringing the party back to full health after the robber was supposed to have disarmed a trap.

Ninja: If you roll a 13 or better in all prime requisites, you can assign the character to the ninja class. The ninja has all the skills of the robber, but his first attack is always considered an assassination attempt, and he is the only character who can wield ninja-designed weaponry.

Barbarian: With the highest number of starting hit points, the barbarian is somewhat limited in the types of weaponry and armor that can be used and worn. Consider the barbarian to be the battering ram for the group.

After deciding on a class, you assign a race to your character: human (can strongly resist poison and sleep spells); elf (sleep spell resistance is slight); dwarf (poison resistance is quite strong); gnome (some resistance to spells of magic); and half-orc (some sleep spell and poison

resistance). Alignments change throughout the game, depending on the individual character's reactions to encounters.

A character can also learn secondary skills while adventuring. These include:

Arms Master: increases a character's weapons accuracy;

Athlete: increases Speed;

Cartographer: grants map-making skills to enable auto-mapping;

Crusader: enables quests to be bestowed to the party;

Diplomat: increases Personality;

Gambler: increases Luck;

Gladiator: increases Might;

Hero/Heroine: causes all of a character's statistics to be raised;

Linguist: improves Intellect;

Merchant: strikes better bargains when buying or selling items;

Mountaineer: allows the party to cross mountain ranges, but two party members must have this skill;

Navigator: prevents becoming lost;

Pathfinder: allows far easier maneuvering through forests, but (like mountaineering) two party members must possess this secondary skill;

Pickpocket: increases thieving capabilities; and

Soldier: increases Endurance.

The Apple II version requires use of the arrow keys for moving forward, back, left, and right. You can also Bash Door, change the Controls (such as game speed and sound), Dismiss a hireling (especially if you cannot pay him), Exchange position with another member of the questing party, Quick Ref for an overview of all party members statistics, Rest to recuperate spell and hit points, Search for treasure or other items, Unlock a locked door, or enter the number of a character in order to see that character's profile.

Movement is particularly easy with *Might and Magic II*, as you are presented with a three-dimensional view of your surroundings. The only visual aberration occurs in large areas, where you cannot see more than three hexes in front of you. The graphic display on the Apple II version is as good as that of the original program, because it enhances and does not detract from play. Considering the 8-bit technology the programmers had to work with, they were able to bring some, amazing detail to the screens. From the vines that cover the walls in the caverns to small items in the shops, such details abound throughout the adventure.

What happens when you encounter a hostile opponent? You may Attack, which takes you directly into combat; try to Bribe the hostiles with food, gold, or gems; Hide, which in some circumstances is a tremendously good idea; or Run. If you decide to attack, the screen display splits into four windows. The upper left corner of the screen displays an animated picture of one of the creatures you are confronting. The upper right screen names each of the attacking creatures. If

one of those so named has a check mark in front of its name, it can engage in hand-to-hand combat. Each creature is also assigned a capital letter. If your attacking character is asked by the program which monster he is trying to hit, you enter the letter designation of the creature-target. The middle window offers combat actions for the active character, and the lower window displays each of your characters with his current hit points and shows who is in combat position. Battle options include:

Attack: use whatever weapon is at hand (missile-carrying characters can fire those weapons);

Fight: initiate hand-to-hand combat using the weapon in hand;

Shoot: fire a missile weapon;

Cast: cast spells (you are asked what level and number spell to throw at your character's enemies);

Use: activate the special power of any item the character is carrying;

Block: raise your character's armor class by one point to defend against an opponent's attack;

Run: seek safety (survivors can recruit more adventurers later);

Exchange: move into a different position within the party; and

View: see your character's statistics.

Once the battle is over, the group should search for any newly acquired treasures.

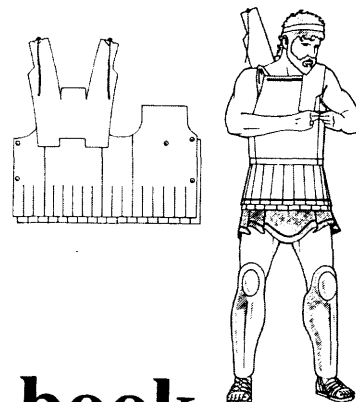
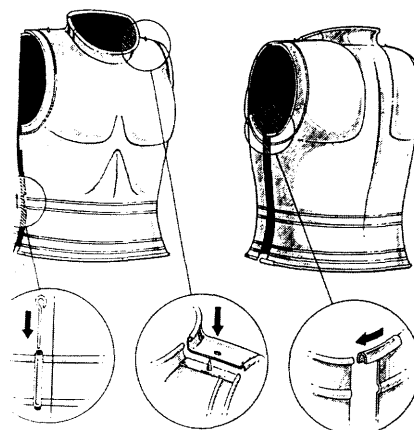
Might and Magic II starts at the Middlegate Inn. Here you can rest without encounters to regain hit points and spell points. Saving the game requires that you sign in at any one of five inns (in the towns of Middlegate, Atlantium, Tundara, Vulcania, and Sandsobar). We certainly would prefer that the game have the ability to save elsewhere throughout the world of Cron, as getting to an inn after an especially tiring and painful combat can, in itself, be an adventure in frustration. When your party is all out of spell points, your cleric can't heal you, you can't rest because of random encounters, and you're without food, you may find that your party is without hope.

Outside the walls of the Middlegate inn, you'll find some commercial edifices: a brain detoxification specialist, a blacksmith for weaponry and armor (he even has daily specials), a tavern, a temple, an area for character training, a mages' guild, an expeditionary specialist, places to obtain training in secondary skills for thieving and tracking, and an arena for special combats, in which the winners are awarded gold pieces. Other fine folk you can run into include the wizard Nordon, Otto Happer, and Nordanna,

Let us warn you: Even your first encounters as new adventurers can be extremely lethal. To complete *Might and Magic II* requires hundreds of hours and much patience, as your original party will certainly not survive intact for the whole adventure.

Wherever you go throughout Cron,





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watch for clues. The outdoor adventuring is enormous in scope, with mountains, forests, and mysterious locales. The only way you are going to defeat the source of ultimate destruction for the land is to pay strict attention to what your adventuring party is accomplishing.

And then, just when you think you're succeeding, you enter the caverns below Middlegate. Whew, what a treacherous area that is! Here are some of the encounters we stumbled across in our 12 forays into the caverns: old miser, cursed corpse, goblin, kobold captain, juggler, arachnoid, insect plague (quite deadly, we assure you), giant beetle, ranger, swamp dog, giant lizard, winged steed (who breathes fire), orc, beggar, inept wizard, giant ogre, poltergeist, greedy snitch, fool, skeleton, blood sucker, burglar, mutant swine (that fire missile weapons at you), men-at-arms, carnage spirit (depletes your characters' statistics), conjurer, screaming pods, nasty witch, mugger, thug trainees, woodsman (superb with bow and arrow), brain eater, and hypnobeetle. There could quite possibly be others in the cavern, but we haven't completed our quest down there and haven't had the time to continually fight our way through the hordes of beasts.

Now we come to the part of the game we dislike the most: the random encounters. Quite honestly, we feel there are far too many of them, appearing too often and without purpose. And, if a random encounter is random, why do they occur in the same locations? If you enter certain areas, you can count on "random" encounters. That's senseless. The program should cull through the encounter database and assign the encounter based on previous battles (with monsters dying left and right, surely their ranks are depleting!), time of day, and so on. If an encounter is then assigned, the placement for the actual confrontation should be an additional four squares west, or nine squares north; it should not occur in the same square each time.

We also feel that some of the nasties that gather to form these encounters are the most unnatural alliances we've ever seen.

Take, for example, one of our last encounters in the caverns, with one hypnobeetle, two brain eaters, eight cursed corpses, and three thug trainees. The brain eater and cursed corpses, being undead, would surely have finished off the thug trainees before turning their attention to an approaching group of questing folk; And the hypnobeetle would certainly avoid the company of others.

In addition, some of the folk we encountered had no reason to attack us. For example, woodsmen are hard-working foresters. Why do they care if we are in the caverns? And what are woodsmen doing in the caverns in the first place? Were they under a geas imposed by the evil that is swarming Cron? Unfortunately, those who opposed us didn't answer any of these questions.

Might and Magic II is a good game. The dollar value is high, the 8-bit graphics are superb, and the adventures are exciting and interesting. We feel, however, that there are far too many encounters for no good reasons. Adventure games should offer more meaningful rewards beyond experience points and gold for killing monsters. Fortunately for *Might and Magic II*, the reasons we recommend its purchase are the various and sundry visits to 60 different areas, the beneficial mini-quests that are crucial to your team's success. You will certainly spend hours at your computer learning all there is to learn about Cron. No, *Might and Magic II* does not have the impact of the original *Might and Magic*, but then, even in Hollywood, successful sequels are a rarity.

The PC/MS-DOS version of this game is \$49.95. A Commodore 64/128 version is due shortly. See this column in DRAGON® issue #144 for selected screen shots.

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Hostage is a superb game containing exceptional graphics, an up-beat soundtrack, and an exciting story line. You control a six-person rescue team that must save the hostages without any of the team members or hostages being killed.

Once booted, the game presents a title screen and queries you for a specific word from the game manual before it continues. A menu then presents you with options such as selecting one of three difficulty levels: Lieutenant, Captain, or Commander. In order for you to try the Captain or Commander levels, you must have succeeded in the hardest mission of the prior level and have remembered the password that comes with that success.

You then select the mission you want. The training mission doesn't have any hostages; each of the four subsequent missions gives you less time to complete the assignment than the previous mission.

In the first stage of the game, you set up three sharpshooters across the street from the invaded embassy. This sounds easier than it is, for the terrorists have searchlights scanning the street and fire at anything that moves. Your marksmen can dive for cover, roll, and even crawl across the ground to escape spotlight detection or incoming rounds. If you make a team member dive for cover, you can check a map to see how far away he lands from his final position.

Stage two of the game begins with a view of the helicopter that drops the other three members of the team onto the roof of the embassy. The screen changes to an overview of the embassy showing each member's location within the building.

In order to be successful, you must be able to switch control between team members quickly. This is accomplished by pressing the function key that corresponds to the desired team member. If you are maneuvering one team member, the computer will alert you that another member is in imminent danger by flashing that person's name and the key to press to gain immediate control.

Three team members are deposited on the roof and must get inside the embassy by rappelling down the side of the building and breaking in through a window. They can descend, climb, and push away from the building when rappelling. It's a good idea to push away from the building for extra power at those times when it becomes necessary to break a window. If you don't break through the window, a terrorist can easily pick you off.

When a member finally breaks into the embassy, the screen presents you with a different perspective. You see your rescue team member and a mini-map that reveals the schematics of the current floor with your team member's position. When

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t h e n o . 1 c h o i c e f o r g a m e s

played at the Lieutenant level, all terrorists and hostages are indicated by dots that move around on the map. The Captain level shows you the hostages and terrorists on the mini-map only. The Commander level offers no clues about the locations of the terrorists or hostages—you must be on your toes!

The mission objective is to find and rescue the hostages and place them in the upper right-hand corner room on the third floor. When you find a hostage, he follows you until you get to that room. Sometimes a terrorist will find you, and you must fire and kill him. When you fire, you see the bullet holes spraying into the walls. You can use those holes as markers to determine where you need to aim the gun in order to hit your current target.

The terrorists are not dumb. They manage to accomplish some pretty sneaky maneuvers to stop you from completing your objective. One terrorist may run up to the third floor and enter the room where the hostages are placed for safe-keeping. The terrorist either kills all of the hostages or hides behind them. The latter move makes it difficult for a team member to kill the terrorist without hitting the hostages as well.

Once in a while, a terrorist hides in a room that means certain death should a team member enter it. This is when the sharpshooters outside become extremely valuable. Switch to the marksman's view and you'll see rifle sights that can be positioned on the terrorist's silhouette as he moves behind the window. But don't go on a killing spree, firing at anything silhouetted in the window. There's a good chance your marksman will hit a hostage instead of bagging the bad guy.

Once the mission is completed, either because the terrorists have won or you've rescued the hostages, the game ends. A newspaper front page rates your performance from Disaster to Perfect. A Perfect score for the hardest mission of each level earns you the password for the next level of difficulty.

Hostage possess an accuracy factor

other games lack. Bullet holes are permanent, and dead terrorists and hostages remain at the locations where they were slain. If you return to a room where there was previous activity, you see the same bullet holes and the same deceased there.

Hostage is a fast-paced, action-packed game that requires fully thought-out player strategy. The graphics, sound, and music combine to make this an exciting game. The price of admission to Hostage is worth every cent. This is a strong product, and the odds are that your computer will become hostage to Hostage.

News and new products

The Avalon Hill Game Company

4517 Harford Road
Baltimore MD 21214
(301) 254-9200

The Avalon Hill Game Company has released *Police Blotter*. You become a rookie detective at the 13th Precinct of the Queensport Police Department and interview witnesses, decipher police reports, and gather clues. Seven mysteries are included. They involve blackmail, kidnapping, theft, and murder, with each case programmed for three levels of complexity, from rookie to seasoned detective. There are many false clues, red herrings, and dead ends to make the game much more than a logical walk-through. *Police Blotter* can be played by one to four players. An on-screen case clock adds an element of competition by tracking the time it takes you to apprehend a suspect. The game comes with a map of Queensport's 13th Precinct. *Police Blotter* is available for the Apple II computer family and will soon be available for the Apple Macintosh and PC/MS-DOS computers. The price is \$29.95.

Data East USA, Inc.

470 Needles Drive
San Jose CA 95112
(408) 286-7074

An action-oriented street fighting game has now found its way to the Apple II and

PC/MS-DOS computer. Entitled *Bad Dudes*, the game turns players into modern-day heroes on a mission to rescue the President of the United States from deadly kidnappers. Players are dedicated to preserving good and upholding justice. They fight waves of ninja, dogs, and other enemies using weapons such as knives, shurikens, nunchucks, and fists. The price is \$34.95 for the Apple II version and \$39.95 for the PC/MS-DOS version.

Also from Data East is *Guerrilla War*, a combat-action adventure based on the hit arcade game of the same name. One or two players become involved in a revolution to overthrow the government, liberate the country's people, and rescue fellow guerrillas being held hostage. This is accomplished through use of bazookas, flamethrowers, and grenades, among other weapons. The PC/MS-DOS price is \$39.95. Versions for the Atari ST (\$39.95), Commodore Amiga (\$44.95), and C64/128 (\$29.95) are expected soon.

Electronic Arts

1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

Electronic Arts has released Chuck Yeager's *Advanced Flight Trainer 2.0*. If you'll recall, the original *Chuck Yeager Advanced Flight Simulator* achieved the Software Publisher's Association platinum status in one year's time. This all-new version was also designed by Ned Lerner and includes over 20 new features. Included with the package is an added bonus, a flying insights audio tape by Chuck Yeager, who shares several of his flying experiences as he personally instructs you on your first software flight. For PC/MS-DOS machines, this simulation is priced at \$49.95. A 5¼"- and 3½"-disk bundle is available for \$54.95; owners of the original version can upgrade to version 2.0 for \$24.00 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling.

Paragon Software Corp.

(distributed by Medalist International)
180 Lakefront Drive
Hunt Valley MD 21030
(412) 838-1166

The Amazing Spider-Man and Captain America in Dr. Doom's Revenge is coming to your PC/MS-DOS computer. Using the multipanel graphic format of comic-book pages, the story line comes directly from the comics themselves. Dr. Doom has masterminded the theft of a nuclear warhead that he plans to launch at New York City, and he has summoned the world's most powerful villains to assist in his scheme. The events leading up to the game are chronicled in a Marvel comic book included in the game package.

Spider-Man and Captain America must infiltrate Dr. Doom's castle. Spider-Man makes his way to Dr. Doom's missile silo, while Captain America goes after the mad genius himself. Two players can each control one of the super-heroes, or one

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Also available from West End Games:

Dr. Doom's
Revenge: Some
encouraging
words from
Dr. Doom.



player can alternate controlling the two good guys in over 20 separate arcade battle screens. The price is \$44.95. Versions for the C64/128, Commodore Amiga, and Atari ST are also planned.

Mindcraft

(distributed by Electronic Arts)
2341 - 205th Street, Suite 102
Torrance CA 96501
(213) 320-5214

The Magic Candle is a medieval fantasy role-playing game that requires the player to save the land of Deruvia from the wrath of the arch-demon Dreax. That foe has been imprisoned within the flame of the magic candle for ages. You must stop the candle from melting before Dreax escapes and wreaks havoc on the peaceful lands. Deruvia is inhabited by dwarves, elves, goblins, wizards, traditional fantasy creatures, and many new ones. Within this vast world are 26 different monsters, 24 magic spells, 54 dungeon levels, six towns, six villages, and two castles. Question everyone you meet, then use your acquired skills to recover the lost knowledge needed to stop the candle from burning out! This game is available for Apple II and PC/MS-DOS machines at \$49.95. A version for the C64/128 is also available for \$39.95.

Mindscape, Inc.

There's a new, top-secret training camp for the military elite, and Mindscape knows all about it. *Combat Course* tests your characters to the utmost. Dynamite, grenades, dogs, and trenches await you in obstacle courses and combat. With four challenging levels, this game allows you to build your own course for the ultimate test. Your unrelenting drill sergeant, who shouts orders on the Atari ST and Commodore Amiga versions, demands push-ups and hand-to-hand combat. Only the best survive. The game is available for the Atari ST and Commodore Amiga (\$39.95), PC/MS-DOS machines (\$34.95), and the C64/128 (\$29.95).

Origin Systems

136 Harvey Road, Building B
Londonderry NH 03053
(603) 644-3360

Tangled Tales is now available for the Apple II computer family and the C64/128 personal computer. Priced at \$29.95, this fantasy role-playing adventure game is subtitled "The Misadventures of a Wizard's Apprentice." It offers a lighthearted, witty approach to traditional fantasy role-playing adventures. You are cast in the role of a wizard's apprentice and must perform three progressively more difficult tasks as proof of your worthiness. A delightful world of haunted houses, medieval fortresses, and country farms awaits you, as well as more than 50 characters. The game features an easy-to-use menu, icon interfaces, state-of-the-art graphics, and an intriguing story line.

Dr. Doom's
Revenge: Visit
strange places
and meet
interesting
people.



Dr. Doom's
Revenge:
No rest for
the weary.



Melbourne House/Psygnosis

711 West 17th Street, Suite G9
Costa Mesa CA 92627
(714) 631-1001

Barbarian is similar to popular arcade games. In more than 300 animation sequences in 48 background scenes, Hegor the Barbarian runs a gauntlet of over 20 different traps and enemies. After reaching his goal and defeating the all-powerful Necron, Hegor must quickly fight his way out of the same maze, as it is about to crumble around him. *Barbarian* is already being shipped for the C64/128 (\$29.99), Atari ST, and Commodore Amiga computers. The PC/MS-DOS version will sell for \$39.99.

Maxis Software

(distributed by Broderbund Software)
953 Mountain View Drive, Suite #113
Lafayette CA 94549
(415) 376-6434

A game entitled *SimCity* has found its way to retailers' shelves for the C64/128 computer. This city simulator enables you to become mayor and city planner of a sophisticated simulated city. You zone land; balance budgets; install utilities; manipulate economic markets; control crime, traffic, and pollution; and overcome natural disasters. In the predesigned cities, or those that you build, you actually see traffic on the roads, trains on the rails, planes in the air, even football games in the stadium. The Sims move into your city and work, play, drive, and complain about crime and taxes. Eight predesigned cities are included, ranging from Tokyo in 1957 to Boston in 2010, just before a nuclear meltdown. The price for the C64/128 version is \$29.95. A Commodore Amiga version is also expected soon. The original Macintosh version is priced at \$44.95, with a PC/MS-DOS version expected in August.

Clue corner

We receive numerous letters each week, most containing the marvelous game hints and tips that close each column. A few, especially of late, complain that the game hints cover only a few games. This problem is to be expected. Games that are perceived to be of the highest entertainment value usually sell the most units, so it is only natural that more letters containing hints about them should come our way. Also, if more of our readers are buying those popular games, the value of hints for those games outweighs that of hints for games few people bother to purchase. But if you want to offer more about one of the less-popular games, write to us with your hints and tips for that game, and they'll be published for interested gamers.

The Bard's Tale III (Electronic Arts)

In the dimension called Arboria, to get the Nightspear, you must have an acorn from the acorn tree and some water of life



Guerrilla War: A revolution is hard work.

from the underwater palace. With these in hand, enter Valarian's Tower. Immediately upon entering, cast APAR and teleport two levels up. Advance one space, and then use the acorn followed by the water of life. This raises the obstructing stone and gains access to a stairwell that leads to the level containing the Nightspear.

In the dimension called Gelidia, there are three towers inside the Ice Keep. These towers are white, grey, and black. To enter the towers, proper spells have to be cast in a specific order. They are:

The White Tower: "LEVI, ANMA, and PHDO.

The Grey Tower: INWO, WIHE, FOFO, and INVI.

The Black Tower: GREE, SHSP, FEAR, SUEL, and SPBI.

In the dimension called Kinestia, you must find two keys, the right key and the left key. These are used to open a portal in Ferofig's workshop that leads to Urmech. When you find Urmech, don't kill him, as he can transform your characters into geomancers.

In the dimension called Tenebrosia, the items needed to find Scedu are the shadow lock and the shadow door. The shadow lock can be found in the shadow canyon. The shadow door can be found by

taking some tar from the tar quarry and pouring it on the trees that surround a dark shape on the ground in the dark copse. After obtaining both items, go to the middle of Nowhere and use the shadow door followed by the shadow lock. This creates a hole in the ground that leads to Scedu.

To save a lot of time in getting to Tarmitia, just go to the ghostly death's-head in Berlin and say TYR followed by WERRA. This will teleport you to Tarmitia.


In the dimension called Malefia, you will come across six statues. Use the following items on the corresponding statues:

Valarian's bow on the statue of Valarian;
Lanair's sphere on the statue of Lanair;
Alliria's belt on the statue of Alliria;
Ferofig's helm on the statue of Ferofig;
Scedu's cloak on the statue of Scedu;

and

Werra's shield on the statue of Werra.

If it's more gold you're after, give all the party's gold to one character and remove him. Then add him back and pool the gold to another character. Remove this second character. Continue this process until all of the characters have been removed and added back. Turn the computer off and reboot the game. All the characters should



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have the full amount of gold pooled to them. This also works with any item that you find and want to duplicate.

Chris Zink
Spaubeek, The Netherlands

Might and Magic I (New World Comp.)

The Trivia Islands are unmarked in section B-4. The answer to the volcano god's riddle is GALA, but I advise that you ask for the clue first.

J. T. McAniff
Woodbridge Va

Neuromancer (Interplay Productions)

First, some database links and access codes will help all players [see the Neuro-mancer Table].

Also, don't sell very many body parts. Never go below 1,400 constitution points. Do not leave any money in pay until you start entering cyberspace. Watch out for CFM Software. The best virus is Thunder-head.

Dan Komadulski
No address given

Pool of Radiance (SSI)

A good way to fight the large party of orcs at Sokal Keep is to put all of your characters but one at the training ground. Then hire three heros, two curists, one robber, and one theurgist. Place your solo character at the back of this pack. Go directly to the orcs' location. When the fight starts, move your character out of the pack and away from the fighting. Set the game speed at 0 and let the hired NPCs do all of the fighting.

This method should succeed. When the battle is won, go inside the temple and tell the truth. Return to the training ground and pick up the rest of your characters. March directly to City Hall and collect your reward. Return to Sokal Keep and go to the armory that the dead high priest discussed earlier. The shield, sword, and chain mail are all + 1.

Charles Johnson
Green Bay WI

Ultima V (Origin)

The moongates can be moved. Search the area on the ground where a moongate was located after it has disappeared. Also, the Shrine of Spirituality can be found simply by entering any moongate at precisely midnight. If you can't figure out how to slay the Shadowlords, the isle east of Blackthorn's holds important information on the process.

Michael Natale
Westboro MA

There is a keep on the small forest-covered island southeast of Jhelom. If you speak to the master of the keep, he will give you a spyglass. This item is most useful for knowing the locations of the Shadowlords. I also think you should know many BLINK spells when you are

NEUROMANCER TABLE

Base	Link	Access
PANTHER MODERNS	CHAOS	MAINLINE
CHEAP HOTEL	CHEAPO	COCKROACH
NASA	VOYAGER	APOLLO
IRS	IRS	AUDIT
FUJI	FUJI	UCHIKATSU
HOSAKO	HOSAKO CORP	FUNGEKI
SEU	SOFTEN	PERMAFROST
TACTICAL POLICE	KEIASTSU	SUPERTAC
TOLAKA	YAKUZA	YAK
EASTERN SEABOARD	EASTSEABOD	LONGISLAND
GENTLEMAN LOSER	LOSER	LOSER
GEMEIN-SCHAFT	BANK GEMEIN	EINTRITT

going to get the shards.

Daniel Inger
Suffern NY

We'd also like to thank Rick Davis of Fullerton, Calif., for his efforts in writing gaming hints for Ultima V. His expertise is certainly without doubt but, unfortunately, his guide to immortality in Ultima V was far too long to print. Also, we feel that utilizing all of his marvelous guidance would cause gamers to become nearly omnipotent and, in so doing, lose some of the joy of exploration in this game.

SimCity (Maxis Software)

Roads and mass-transit rails must provide access to and from each zone for that zone to fully develop. And don't forget that each section of road, rail, bridge, and tunnel has a yearly maintenance cost. These costs add up, and if you build too many roads and rails, you generate high maintenance costs before you have the revenues to support such expenses. Rails carry much more traffic than roads do, so when building and zoning an area that you think will generate heavy traffic, try installing rails instead of roads in the early stages of development. Also, install rails when you start receiving messages that heavy traffic is building up.

If you are really into experimentation, try building a city that possesses no roads at all. Don't bulldoze any more forest than you must! As land value increases, so do the taxes collected. Proximity to forests, parks, and water increases land value. Natural shoreline increases property values more than landfill shoreline, and proximity to downtown raises property values. A downtown area is defined as the center of mass of the population density. The simulator calculates the average geographical center of the population.

Hartley and Patricia Lesser

Please don't forget that the Beastie Award needs your vote. To cast your ballot for the best game, write the name of the game, the system it was played on, and

your name and address on a postcard, then mail it to us at 179 Pebble Place, San Ramon, CA 94583. We are compiling the votes now and are enjoying the comments you are adding to your votes. Perhaps some of these will be included with the awards. Just don't forget to vote! And game on!

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Arrows of the East

by David Kloba

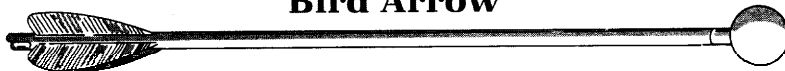
Expanded archery for *Oriental Adventures*

Before the AD&D® *Oriental Adventures* volume came out, buying arrows was a breeze. You just went to a weaponsmith and asked for arrows (there was only one type). Now, the weaponsmiths in Kara-Tur ask which type of arrow you want. You want the one that does the most damage, right? Well, not always. Suppose a kappa is terrorizing a local village. You're going to have a hard time punching through its AC -2 shell, let alone doing massive damage to it. What's needed here is an armor-piercing arrow. Unfortunately, *Oriental Adventures* doesn't give modifications for armor-piercing arrows other than the change in damage — and damage was lowered!

This article suggests a better method for conducting missile combat; four new types of arrows are also introduced. Note that the damage ratings for arrows given in *Oriental Adventures* remain the same. What has been changed is the focus of the armor-class adjustments, which has been moved from the different bows to the various types of arrows. Despite this change, the bow distinctions are retained through the creation of a separate modifier table for each bow.

The four new arrows types are described as follows.

Bird Arrow



This arrow looks much like the humming bulb arrow, having a large, rounded tip instead of a point. This arrow is mostly used on birds or small creatures which would be sliced in half by a standard arrowhead. Although seldom used against human foes, this arrow has been employed on occasion when nothing else was available. This bird arrow does 1-2 hp damage against any size of creature.

Target Arrow



The target arrow is designed for use in the training of younger warriors. This arrow lacks a metal arrowhead; instead, its tip is simply fire-hardened wood. This arrow is rarely used in normal combat, but (as with bird arrows) it is useful when nothing else is available.

Hollow-Tip arrow



This arrow can only be made by the best of the arrowsmiths. It should be extremely rare, difficult to purchase, and available only in large cities. The hollow-tip arrow is commonly thought of as a ninja weapon and carries penalties to honor for its use (see *Oriental Adventures*, page 36), although any class of character can use it. The arrowhead of the arrow is replaced by a finely balanced piece of pottery, usually in the shape of a small bulb. This pottery bulb is secured to the arrow with tree sap and thread. The bulb is usually filled with grenade powders. The following are some substances for possible use in these arrows, with appropriate modifiers:

Acid: The target area affected by the acid is a 5" - diameter circle. See the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 80, for the effects of acid on various materials; the arrow will do an additional 1-3 hp damage from acid to living targets.

Dust: The target has a + 2 on all saving throws vs. the effects of magical or mundane dusts contained in this arrow bulb.

Flash: The target is blinded for 1-6 rounds by flash powder.

Gas: Gas is expelled from the bulb upon striking the target. The gas affects the target in the same round, expanding out in a 5' radius centered on the target. All others within that area are affected by the gas on the next round. The gas dissipates on the third round, affecting no one.

Pepper: The target gains a +2 on any saving throw vs. the effects (usually a save vs. poison or else sneezing for 2-8 segments, preventing spell-casting and placing a - 1 "to hit" penalty on attacks for that round).

Poison: The target area affected by the poison is a 5" - diameter circle, large enough for one being. Note that only insinuate poisons work with this arrow. See pages 20-21 of the DMG for more information on poison and its effects.

Fishing Arrow



This arrow was originally made by fishermen, who would tie thin cords to the ends of the arrows and fire them into the water in an effort to spear fish. The archers would then haul in the lines and their catches. Over the years, this arrow has been modified for use in warfare. The arrow does little damage when it hits, but the small barbs along its length cause terrible wounds if the arrow is removed improperly. Ninja have put this arrow to another good use by tying a silken rope to the arrow's end, then firing it into a wooden building or tree. This arrow catches better in wood than a standard arrow. A person of normal weight (i.e., up to 200 lbs.) who climbs a rope tied to a normal arrow pulls the arrow loose on a roll of 1-4 on 1d6. A fishing arrow, on the other hand, comes loose only on a 1-2 on 1d6.

Crossbow bolts are only rarely specialized because bolts of unusual shapes would not slide across the firing groove of the crossbow, making it impossible to fire. Special crossbows may be custom made to accommodate special bolts, with the price being 2-8 times the normal cost of the item and requiring twice the amount of time to complete. In so doing, a bowyer has a -4 on his roll for successfully making the weapon. In the event of success, the resultant crossbow is capable of firing only one type of special bolt, which must also be custom made by the crossbow maker.

Table 1 shows the costs of these special arrows. Tables 2 and 3 are for the daikyu (great bow) and hankyu (little bowl, respectively). For the short composite bow, use Table 3 with a -1 on all figures. For the short bow, use Table 3 with a -2 on all figures. Table 4 shows the damage done by the new arrows.

Ω

Table 1
Costs of New Arrows

Arrow	cost
Bird	5 yuan
Training	1 yuan
Hollow-tip, acid	3 ch'ien
Hollow-tip, dust	13 yuan
Hollow-tip, flashpowder	5 tael
Hollow-tip, gas	3 ch'ien
Hollow-tip, poison	2 ch'ien
Hollow-tip, pepper	2 tael
Fishing	2 yuan

Table 2
Arrow Adjustments for Daikyu

	Armor class of target									
Arrow type	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Armor piercing	+2	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4	+4	+4	+5	
Frog crotch	-1	0	0	0	0	+2	+3	+3	+4	
Humming bulb	-2	-1	0	0	0	+1	+1	+2	+3	
Leaf head	0	0	0	+1	+2	+3	+3	+4	+4	
Standard	0	0	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+4	+4	
Bird	-2	-1	0	0	0	+1	+1	+2	+3	
Training	0	0	0	+1	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4	
Hollow tip	-1	-1	0	0	0	+1	-1	+2	+3	
Fishing	0	0	0	+1	+2	+2	+3	+3	+4	

Table 3
Armor Adjustment for Hankyu

	Armor class of target									
Arrow type	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Armor piercing	-2	-2	0	+1	+2	+2	+3	+4	+4	
Frog crotch	-4	-2	-1	-1	0	0	+1	+2	+3	
Humming bulb	-4	-3	-2	-2	-1	0	0	+1	+1	
Leaf head	-4	-3	-2	-1	-1	0	0	+1	+2	
Standard	-4	-4	-2	-1	0	0	+1	+2	+2	
Bird	-4	-3	-2	-2	-1	0	0	+1	+1	
Training	-5	-4	-3	-1	-1	0	0	+1	+2	
Hollow tip	-4	-3	-2	-2	-1	0	0	+1	+1	
Fishing	-5	-4	-3	-1	-1	0	0	+1	+2	

Table 4
Damage for New Arrows

Arrow type	Target size	
	S-M	L
Bird	1-4	1-2
Training	1-3	1-2
Hollow-tip	1-2	1-2
Fishing*	1-6	1-4

* This arrow does an extra 1-6 hp damage if removed without the proper precautions. Careful removal takes 2-5 rounds.

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If You Wish Upon a Star . . .

**Ultimate power frequently
means ultimate trouble**

A woefully underplayed facet of adventure gaming is the wish. Many game masters (GMs) excuse themselves from using wishes with comments like, "But wishes are too powerful—they unbalance the game!" or "But wishes are supposed to be rare and precious!" Well, fabulous beasts are supposed to be rare and precious, too, but there is an unsightly profusion of them in most fantasy role-playing game campaigns.

In classical folklore, wishes are generally as common as dragons, and it would be hard to decide which of the two is more perilous to would-be heroes. Few wishes if any in folklore have ever had completely favorable results. Still, many GMs shake their heads. "The people in fairy tales were careless and stupid," they often say. "You don't know my gamers—they're clever and greedy." Clever and greedy? All the better! For you see, wishes may differ in power and effect. With a little creativity, not only can the nasty practice of denying an overly clever wish be done away with, but an old dimension of magic and danger may be added to a new game campaign.

Efreeti:

"Let me get this straight. Did you just say you wanted me to raze all your ability scores?"

Naive Adventurer:

"Well, yes. . . ."



Wishes in RPGs

Before further discussion of the wish, it is advised that you look at the existing rules for wishes in fantasy role-playing games. Very few games on the market have provisions for wishes; those that do include TSR's AD&D® and D&D®, Steve Jackson Games' GURPS® Fantasy, Iron Crown's ROLEMASTER™, Chaosium's STORMBRINGER®, and (to a lesser degree) Hero Games' FANTASY HERO™ games.

The AD&D game has some of the most elaborate wish rules, including the spell *limited wish* and the more powerful *wish*. Each of these spells is subject to various rule interpretations. The main difference between *limited wish* and *wish* is that the *limited wish* spell cannot do as much as the *wish* spell; *limited wish* fulfills the wish only partially or for a limited duration (unless the wish made is a very minor one). Nearly anything may be wished for, though unreasonable wishes (such as becoming a god) or unfair wishes (wishing an enemy dead) are not allowed. Additionally, to provide game balance, wishes may not be used to raise ability scores above 16 (10 *wish* spells being needed for each point thereafter).

A similar spell, *alter reality*, may produce the same effects as a *limited wish* spell, though as the desired result is exactly expressed in an illusion, it is not subject to the same interpretation as is a *limited wish*. As a penalty for the rampant casting of such spells, each *wish* and *alter reality* spell cast ages the caster three years; a *limited wish* adds one year of age (Dungeon Masters Guide, page 13). Additionally, the AD&D game provides for magical rings, swords, and talismans which grant wishes, and provides for the djinn and efreet of Arabian mythology, who may also bestow wishes and who are commonly tied to rings and iron bottles, respectively. Gods, powerful demons and devils, dao, and marids also grant *wishes* or related spells (though dao pervert such requests).

[The D&D game gives nearly a full page of restrictions and advice on the wish spell available to magic-users of 33rd-36th level, with Intelligence scores of 18 or more. This material is found on page 10 of the Master Players' Book. Greater djinni and greater efreeti in this game can grant wishes.]

The GURPS Fantasy game has a wish system that is similar to the system provided in the AD&D game. In GURPS Fantasy games, however, wishes are categorized as level 1, 2, or 3 Wish spells. Level 1 and 2 Wishes are simply less powerful than a level 3 Wish, which is of a power comparable to the AD&D game's *wish* spell. The GURP Fantasy game is specific in ruling what may be wished for. The possibilities include: any spell of the Wish spell's level or less; a point of ability skill; an advantage; and anything the GM is pleased to

grant. The last possibility is, of course, the most open-ended and important.

The ROLEMASTER game does not have wish spells, although it does allow wishes to be granted by genii. Of these genii, there are several types, some of whom grant wishes and all of whom are well documented in Arab mythology.

Jann are the simplest of these creatures; they grant the simplest wishes and are limited to granting one before they are freed from their earthly prisons (usually some large domestic feature like a closet or feed bin). These wishes are able to transfer items up to 10 miles per level of the jann, though they are unable to create, transform, heal, mend, or otherwise produce change. Jann wishes may also be used to have the jann analyze an item with no chance of failure.

Jinn are tied to smaller items than are jann, generally to jars, bottles, or other portable foci. Jinn are sneaky and untrustworthy, and they will attempt to pervert or twist the intent of any wish, usually following a request exactly to its letter (similar to the tactic used by the AD&D game's efreet and dao). A jinn must grant three wishes before it is freed. As an additional complication, if the container changes hands, all of the effects of the previous wishes disappear when a new wish is made, and the jinn must start over again with its new master. Jinn wishes are otherwise identical to those of jann. If the master desires, one of his wishes may be an item analysis or a truthfully answered question.

Shaitan, who are tied to trees and other natural features, may each grant a greater wish, which may involve either transference or transformation, though not creation or life-giving. The one wish granted may also be used for item analysis, a truthful question, or a magical search.

Marid are the most dangerous of the ROLEMASTER game's wish-granting genii. These creatures have the ability to grant false wishes which seem identical to those of shaitan, though such wishes may be revoked at any time the marid pleases (usually at the time most harmful to the wisher).

The STORMBRINGER game, with its demon-magic system, provides for wishes through the inclusion of Demons of Desire, who may be summoned to grant wishes. Demons of Desire appear as attractive members of the opposite sex (much like the classical succubi and incubi), and they can be commanded to fetch particular objects from anywhere in the world (with limitations on size, of course). They may also be commanded to transform a human subject. The number of wishes granted by a Demon of Desire is limited by its constitution. However, as with the AD&D game's efreet and dao, and the ROLEMASTER game's jann, Demons of Desire might pervert requests by attempting to fulfill them in the easiest and most literal manner possible. Demons of Desire

may also be bound to objects such as rings or swords. Note that summoning a Demon of Desire bound to a ring also uses one of the demon's wishes.

The FANTASY HERO game, though it has no specific wish spell (or any other specific spells for that matter), does have several lists of spell effects. As a result, it is relatively simple to define a wish in terms of what the results would be if it came from a spell. A wish-granting creature or item, then, could be defined in terms of a CHAMPION™ game's character (from Hero Games' compatible superhero role-playing game). In this manner, a wish-granting creature would have a "cosmic power pool" with limitations stating that all spells cast would have to be done by magic, spoken aloud, prefaced by "I wish," and so forth. This would include a sufficient amount of dice rolled to overcome resistance; on a successful roll, a wish could then be granted.

These games show some of the possibilities for wish arbitration, and a few of the classical and literary sources of the fantasy wish. The closest thing to a wish in most other fantasy role-playing games is divine intervention, which states that an omnipotent being can do whatever it wants, including granting wishes to PCs. These wishes, however, are granted only at the gods' (and the GM's) whims.

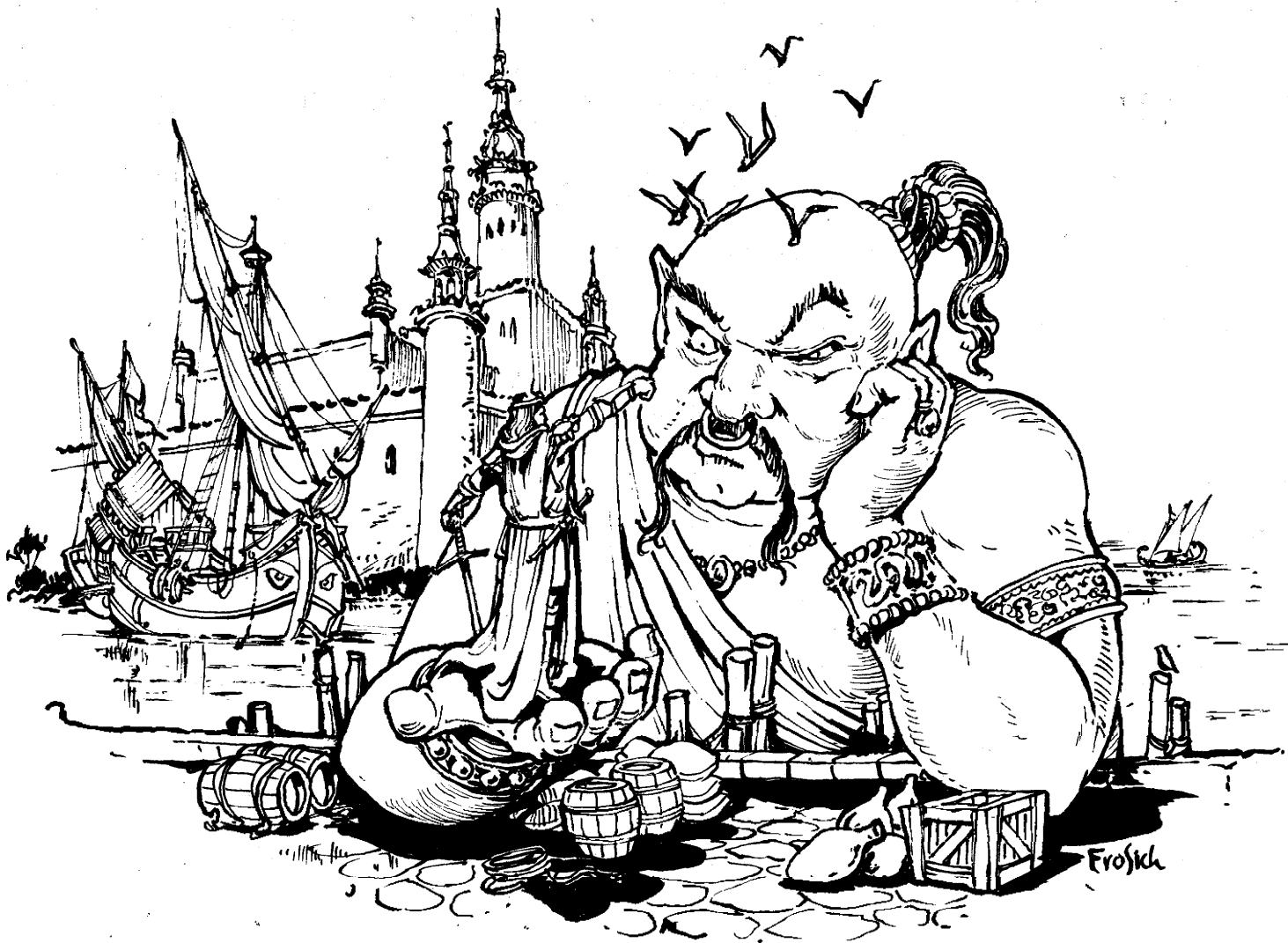
Wishes in folklore

However, to understand the wish more thoroughly, one must know its source. Djinn, demons, and gods are not the only ones who pass out wishes. The list of wish-granters from classical folklore also includes wood nymphs, ghosts, disembodied heads, strange dwarves, good fairies, leprechauns, senile witches, saints, and talking animals (particularly fish).

Some of these beings, such as half-baked witches and strange dwarves, dispense wishes for no particular reason, or else in exchange for a favor later on (usually a first-born child). Demons and devils also grant wishes in exchange for children, though they are equally fond of souls. (Nothing is more fun to a demon or devil than condemning a good soul to Hell.) It should also be noted that the wording of such bargains is often misleading, containing trick phrases like "... in exchange for a small consideration to be named at a later date."

Good fairies, saints and gods, and the rarer sorts of witches and magical dwarves may grant wishes as rewards for particularly kind deeds or polite behavior. (Such beings hold proper etiquette in the highest esteem.) Ghosts, too, have been known to grant wishes, but only in rare circumstances. Traditionally, a spirit offers a wish as a "thank you" gift for laying its body peacefully to rest (please note that an exorcism is *not* peaceful).

Disembodied heads usually grant wishes



to ingratiate themselves with those who find them. Leprechauns, wood nymphs, and talking fish, however, are usually blackmailed out of their wishes ("Please, Mr. Woodcutter – if you spare my tree, I'll give you three wishes!"). Other beings, such as djinn, efreet, and talking dogs with huge eyes, are the slaves of various magical items (rings, urns, and tinder boxes, respectively). These items are the other classical source of wishes, and they are referred to as *wishbringers*.

Wishbringers fall into two categories: occupied and unoccupied items. Occupied items have a resident wish-granter (as with the djinn of Aladdin's Lamp), while unoccupied items grant wishes by use of their own powers (as with the Fortunatus Cap of the Italian fairy tale of the same name). The number of wishes granted may be unlimited, or else limited to a specific small number (traditionally three). Items with unlimited usage are extremely rare; the only well-known examples in classical folklore are Aladdin's Lamp, the Tinder Box described by Hans Christian Andersen, and the Fortunatus Cap.

Aladdin's Lamp and the Tinder Box are both occupied items; the lamp is occupied by a djinn, and the box is occupied by three *big* dogs (these dogs have eyes

respectively the size of teacups, mill wheels, and the round tower at Copenhagen – hence, they are very *big* dogs). As a result, the power of these occupied items is limited to the power of the occupants – awesome, especially in the case of the lamp, but by no means limitless. The Fortunatus Cap (whose fairy tale is sometimes known as "Fortunatus and His Purse") bestowed nearly godlike power on Fortunatus. Due to a curse of ill luck, however, the cap brought ruin upon the bearer's entire family (in the more morose versions of the tale, at least).

Possession of any of these artifacts is also not without other problems, for the item's loyalty is only to the bearer. Furthermore, when palaces appear out of thin air, it's hard to keep the neighbors from noticing – especially wizards who have been attempting to locate that particular artifact for the past 50 years.

Varieties of wishes

This brings up the question of what is to keep a person possessing a wish from wishing for a powerful item such as the Fortunatus Cap, or from simply wishing for more wishes. *Can a person wish for*

more wishes? This has been a classic dilemma for both logic and game-mastering for longer than one likes to contemplate. The best response is: Yes, one can wish for more wishes – but only if one has the right sort of wish. While all wishes are limited in their power, some are more limited than others. The following is a list of the main varieties of wishes garnered from folklore and fiction.

Wish of Omnipotence

"Omnipotence" is actually a misnomer, as this wish cannot perform the impossible; a better title would be the Wish of Ultrapotence. This type of wish can create solid-gold castles out "of thin air, transplant entire kingdoms or rearrange continents, and change large armies into lemmings. Wishes of Omnipotence are either very rare or are squandered on more reasonable requests (more likely both). These wishes are not available from any of the usual distributors – not even the gods – except for the possible exception of the Fates or Lady Luck (a.k.a. Dame Fortune, creator of the Fortunatus Cap). However, there should be a few lost treasures capable of working these magics. A Wish of Omnipotence also makes it possible to wish for more wishes, albeit wishes of

lesser power. The power of these "lesser" wishes is equal to that of the "average" wish — sufficient enough to create a modest tower, rearrange a subdivision, or turn a company of the city watch into small rodents.

Wish of Contrivance

A Wish of Contrivance works like a badly plotted novel. With a normal wish, the magic takes effect immediately; with a Wish of Contrivance, the magic takes effect as soon as it is feasible. For example, a starving party stuck in the middle of a labyrinth makes a wish for food. A normal wish would plant a buffet table right in front of them; with a Wish of Contrivance, the party happens to meet a priestess of Our Lady of the Free Lunch, who has conveniently brought along her *portable banquet hall* and *basket of endless goodies*. Depending on the power of the contrivance, adventurers might be able to obtain more wishes by use of one of these; for example, the wish might make them stumble upon (or into) a wishing well.

Wish of Expiration

Most wishes are permanent unless wished to be otherwise. A Wish of Expiration, however, only lasts for a certain period or until a set time. If granted by a sentient creature, the wish may last only as long as the caster desires. Classic expiration points are sunset, the stroke of midnight, cockcrow, and midday. When this time comes, all primary effects of the wish vanish, though the secondary and tertiary results remain. For example, a boy wishes himself to be a dragon, then proceeds to sit on a village and eat the inhabitants. At moonrise, he regains human form, though the village is still destroyed and the villagers eaten. (This brings up the problem of what happens to food eaten before one changes form. In stories, the standard assumption is that the food also changes — making it so that the boy in the example would just feel very full — though different interpretations might make him explode or have him facing a crowd of angry, newly undigested villagers.)

Wish of Limitations

A Wish of Limitations is similar to a Wish of Expiration, the difference being that a Wish of Limitations usually has spacial instead of temporal boundaries. The effects of a Wish of Limitations are only granted when the wisher is within the bounds of a certain city or the vicinity of a particular shrine; if these bounds are breached, the wish is cancelled. A Wish of Limitations, however, may be able to reinstate itself if the subject is brought back within its boundaries, though it could just as well be of a once-broken, forever-broken nature. Other variants include wishes that work only under certain conditions (sunlight, moonlight, snowstorms, etc.) and wishes that can only be made after certain requirements have been met (that it be a particular day, that the wish be told to no one, that thrice the brindled cat mewed, etc.).

Wish of Malevolence

These wishes are nasty. They are so thoroughly vile, that one might wish he had never gotten the wish (that is, if that didn't entail using another such wish). A Wish of Malevolence is also the wish of choice for demons and devils; as a result, such wishes are often very common. A Wish of Malevolence does everything the wisher asks for — but it comes true in the worst possible way. For example, a person with one of these diabolic magics wishes for a luxurious mansion and receives one — located in beautiful downtown Perdition, the low-rent district of Hell. An attempted resurrection would go awry, creating a vampire, zombie, and other undead. The only good thing (if it can be called good) about a Wish of Malevolence is that if a person wishes for evil, the evil will be more elaborate and grandiose than any nondiabolic being could ever have planned. These wishes are sometimes known as Monkey's Paw wishes, after the horror story of the same name by William W. Jacobs.

Wish of Benevolence

This is simply the opposite of a Wish of

Malevolence. No harm can ever come to a person as a result of using a Wish of Benevolence — though considerable annoyance is possible. The problem with these wishes is that they cannot be used in the slightest part for evil or selfish ends; since many wishes are motivated by greed, this causes complications. This is not to say that wishes of evil intent or motivation won't work; on the contrary, they will, but all the evil aspects will be changed or deleted. A wish for a night of sumptuous enjoyment and debauchery, for example, might teleport the wishers to a charity ball hosted by some kindly religious organization. For granting wishes of healing and kindness, however, a Wish of Benevolence is unsurpassed.

Wish of Contrariness

A Wish of Contrariness will do the exact opposite of whatever is stated. Once this is discovered, however, successive wishes (assuming the wish is one of a set) may be worded to be the exact opposite of the actual desires. (Of course, a wishbringer that grants contrary wishes might fool both the wording and the intent of the wish being made, thus being completely contrary.)

Half-Wish

Half-Wishes can be both amusing and annoying. A Half-Wish does exactly half of what is stated. For instance, a man might say, "I wish for a pair of *boots of jogging* and *slogging*." If the wish were a Half-Wish, the wisher might find himself with only one magic boot, two normal boots, or a pear shaped like a boot, or he might suddenly find himself jogging and slogging. As one can see from the possible interpretations, simply doubling the quantity desired may not always work.

Wish of Overkill

A Wish of Overkill grants everything desired — and more. Depending on the exact wish, this may be either wonderful or horrible. A wish made to rid a city of rats might slay every rat in town instantly — and every other rodent as well, but allowing other creatures to assume the ecological niches of the rodents, perhaps creating even more problems. The same wish might also slay everyone nicknamed "Rat," cause the destruction of every business with the word "rat" in its name, etc.

Wish of Vagueness

A Wish of Vagueness will always work — sort of. The problem with this wish is that it never seems to get the request quite right. A wish for a magic sword conjures an axe, creates clothing that is the wrong size, reincarnates people as animals instead of resurrecting them, and so forth. The degree of vagueness may even vary from wish to wish.

Wish of Misinterpretation

Wishes of Misinterpretation never grant

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Then you hear faint chanting "Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar". Dust billows up and hangs in the still desert air.

Quite suddenly, over the ridge the armies of Saladin appear. rank upon rank, waves of colour, harsh reflections, armoured knights like yourself, horse archers even now wheeling and fitting arrows to bow strings, ranks of Nubian spearmen advancing at the trot.

But for a few minutes you have them where you want them; downhill, off balance and unprepared.

Your commander, Gerard of Rideford, turns in his saddle.

"Ceuch lances, prepare to charge" His eye sweeps along the line. He raises his lance. "We fight for Christ!"

Your horse starts at a trot, breaks to canter, then a full gallop; foot soldiers are swept aside, mounted Turks pulling desperately at their reins trying to face your charge, but it's too late as two hundred Hospitaller crusader knights crash into the Moslem army.

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anything close to what is actually wished for. For example, a wish "to be very strong" might confer tremendous body odor to the wisher by simply misinterpreting the sense of a word. Homonyms will also be shifted (as in the raise/raze dilemma at the beginning of the article). If neither of these cases is possible, words may be misheard. Hence, a wish for "great riches" might yield "great roaches." When in doubt on how to misinterpret a wish, GMs should always opt for the most amusing version.

Wish of Unspoken Desire

A Wish of Unspoken Desire grants whatever a character wants most in his heart, usually at the time the wish is invoked. The effects of a Wish of Unspoken Desire normally have strong emotional ties and are seldom sensible, practical wishes. A dying adventurer could be healed by a Wish of Unspoken Desire, but if he had a subconscious death-wish, he is healed — to face death again almost immediately. When deciding the outcome of a Wish of Unspoken Desire, it is necessary for the GM to have a good idea of the desires of the character who is its subject, though circumstances usually dictate what the unspoken wish will be. A character hopelessly in love with an NPC might wish for gold — and have the NPC receive the gold.

Wish of Least Resistance

These wishes always alter reality as little as possible. While most wishes create whatever objects or results are desired, a Wish of Least Resistance borrows from the nearest possible source. Thus, the statement "I wish for a sword of hacking and slashing?" will immediately grant such an object — even though the real owner may come looking for it. Palace-napping is often accidentally accomplished by means of these wishes and figures prominently in many wish stories. Also, Wishes of Least Resistance that normally result in changing one's person commonly result in body switching; a wish that the character had extreme strength might cause the character to have his personality and mentality exchanged with those of a circus strongman who also has the ugliest face in existence.

Wish of Credit

A Wish of Credit is the most common sort of wish, perhaps stamped with an invisible mark which says "This wish is good for any single purchase not exceeding a total value of X number of gold pieces." A standard, wish of this kind, the sort obtainable from the average witch or djinn, could create or summon material goods worth about 500 gold pieces in the AD&D game system. Other wishes would

have higher or lower limits as dictated by their suppliers. A dryad or leprechaun's wish will be slightly lower in power, while a god-granted wish would have a high credit limit. The specific value of any particular such wish should be calculated as being whatever the goods and services value of the wish is, plus about 5-10% more (shipping and handling charges by the granter).

Any sort of wish previously given could be a Wish of Credit, with the exceptions of Wishes of Omnipotence and Wishes of Least Resistance (the first being priceless and the second not being concerned with money). For example, a wish for all the lost treasures in the Ruins of Reck to be neatly packaged, labelled, and delivered to the doorstep of the requester would be overwhelmingly costly for a Wish of Credit, the gold-piece value of such a spell being tremendous. Yet as the actual alteration of reality is relatively slight (slighter than changing a man into a pig, that is), such a wish might be feasible with a Wish of Least Resistance — though the requester might find such treasures stolen from his doorstep if he isn't home when they are delivered.

Where wishes originate

As one can see, wishes are no simple matter (and those given are only the main varieties). There is, however, still the question of where do all the granters of wishes get them. Possible answers to this question follow.

Witches and wizards: These people get their wishes from the power of their spells. Where do they get their spells? Most role-playing games provide rationales for their magic systems; fairy tales almost never do, though some witches and wizards are alleged to traffic with the Devil. Note that certain spell-casting monsters in the AD&D and D&D games can learn to cast *wish* spells and the like; liches come to mind.

Demons and devils: As long as they continue to ruin good souls, certain demons and devils are granted the power to fulfill wishes by their master or masters. Two excellent examples of such evil wish-granting creatures are Samael, the demon tied to King Solomon's ring (who promised everlasting youth and beauty — for a price) and Mephistopheles (who promised the old scholar Faust youth, love, and everything else in return for this soul).

Good fairies and saints: Like demons and devils, good fairies and saints get their wish-granting powers from their superiors (or superior, if one god grants them).

Gods: Gods normally do whatever they want to do. A good example of this is the Italian tale, "The Three Foolish Wishes," wherein an old Catholic priest is granted three wishes by Jesus and the Twelve Apostles as a reward for his hospitality.

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Table 1
Materialistic Wishes:
Type and
Gold-Piece Value

Wish and limit	
Roll on gp value	
01	Wish of Credit, 500 gp
02-15	Wish of Credit, 2,500 gp
16-75	Wish of Credit, 5,000 gp
76-85	Wish of Credit, 10,000 gp
86-98	Wish of Least Resistance
99	Wish of Omnipotence/Least Resistance
00	Wish of Omnipotence

Table 2
Random Types of Wishes

Roll	Wish
01-05	Wish of Contrivance
06-10	Wish of Malevolence
11-15	Wish of Benevolence
16-20	Wish of Limitations*
21-25	Wish of Expiration* *
26-30	Wish of Contrariness
31-35	Wish of Vagueness
36-40	Wish of Misinterpretation
41-45	Wish of Unspoken Desire
46-50	Wish of Overkill
51-55	Half-Wish
56-75	Otherwise normal wish
76-00	Roll twice, ignoring this roll and any contradictory combinations

* Roll again on Table 3.

** Roll again on Table 4.

Table 3
Wish of
Limitations Categories

Roll Limitation on wish

- 1 Only good at night (sunset to sunrise)
- 2 Only good in daytime (sunrise to sunset)
- 3 Only good in the presence of the moon
- 4 Only good in the presence of fire
- 5 Only good in the presence of water
- 6 Only good in the presence of air
- 7 Only good in the presence of earth
- 8 Only good within a five-mile radius of the wishing site
- 9 Only good so long as the wishbringer is possessed
- 10 Only good so long as the wish is kept a secret

Table 4
Wish of
Expiration Categories*

Roll Expiration time

- 1 Dusk
- 2 Sunset
- 3 Midnight
- 4 Moonrise
- 5 Cockcrow
- 6 Dawn
- 7 Midday
- 8 Certain day of the week (determine which randomly)
- 9 Particular lunar phase (determine which randomly)
- 10 Next solstice or equinox

* If a roll indicates that a Wish of Expiration is granted by a sentient being, there is a 75% chance that the wish will instead be permanent, though only as long as the wish-granter wills it.

Djinn and efreet: These beings have charge accounts for wish-making on their home planes, wherever such may be. To avoid servitude to mortals, they often grant wishes in exchange for freedom. One wish is usually granted per year by such beings. Djinn and efreet able to grant such wishes immediately do so to gain freedom. Two good examples of djinn and efreet granting wishes are "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp" and "The Fisherman and the Genii." In the first tale, there is not only the djinni in the lamp, but the lesser djinni of the magician's rings.

Magic dwarves: Where magic dwarves get their power is anyone's guess, though they may be spell-casters themselves. An example of such wish-granters is found in "The Blue Light," a tale collected by the Brothers Grimm, to which Hans Christian Andersen's "The Tinder Box" is similar.

Ghosts: Wishes are sometimes granted through the very magic of the will-force which keeps a spirit bound to the earth after death. When its onus for earthly existence after death is lifted, a ghost may use the last of its power to grant a wish to whomever released it from its earthly bonds. Another of the tales of the Brothers Grimm, "The Silver Axe," demonstrates this device.

Disembodied heads: These creatures are usually princes cursed at birth by particularly malevolent fairies or by supernatural old women of the same mind-set as the one in "Sleeping Beauty." The curse dooms the unfortunate individual to live his life with only a head and no body until a maiden is found who will fall in love with and marry him, at which point he will get his body back, though only when he is alone with his loved one. As getting to this happy state is a problem, the unfortunate individuals parents (or good fairies who happen to have been present at the christening) will bind a djinn to the head to

either serve it, teach it magic, or both. This sort of curse and Wish-granting may be seen in any of the versions of "The Enchanted Head."

Leprechauns, dryads, and talking animals: These creatures, though relatively weak, have been known to grant fabulously valuable wishes. One reasonable explanation for this is to assume that some of the lesser magical inhabitants of sylvan woodlands have grouped together, forming a protection league of sorts. Started by the leprechauns and dryads, the two groups most adept at spells and spell-like powers, the membership has grown to include talking animals and any of the hundreds of weak magical creatures. Members tithe a portion of their inherent magic into a communal pool, from which wishes can be granted in cases of emergency. Assume that roughly 45% of all leprechauns and 25% of all dryads, along with a sizable number of talking animals, are members of what might be called the Sylvan Creature's Protection Plan. When in a life-threatening situation, the creatures protected are empowered to grant three wishes of roughly 2,500 gp value each.

While mugging dryads and leprechauns may thus be profitable, the communication network between the sylvan creatures is assumed to be strong enough that this sort of habit leaves a good chance for the perpetrators to be lynched by a large band of pixies, elves, or even a suitably bribed dragon. Wish-granting dryads may be found in any of the many versions of the fairy-tale "The Three Wishes." Examples of the magic of leprechauns may be found in the tale "The Field of Ragwort" (or even the old Disney classic film, *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*). Last, but not least, there is also the magic fish in the Brothers Grimms' "The Fisherman and His Wife," and the three dogs in Andersen's "The Tinder Box." Other magic animals may be people under enchantments similar to those on the disembodied heads. These people may be able to cast spells due to their knowledge of the magical arts and the desire to break their own curses. "The White Cat" and "The Golden Crab" are two tales of this type.

Wishbringers, occupied and unoccupied, are only created by gods and very high-level wizards. If an unoccupied wish-bringer (ring, amulet, etc.) is indicated on a normal treasure roll, use the tables at the end of this article to determine the type of wishes contained. If a variant wishbringer is desired, as opposed to the more mundane rings, use Table 5. If an item is occupied, use Table 6 to determine the inhabitant.

Limiting wish-power

GMs are encouraged to make up their own combinations of wishes. Most wishbringers may grant 2-7 wishes, all of

the same type, before losing their powers. Occupied items, however, also give their owner the services of the resident creature, which may last indefinitely (though such servitude is most often broken after the servant grants a prescribed number of wishes, usually three). Some resident creatures will not grant certain types of wishes (e.g., devils won't grant Wishes of Benevolence). A wish-granter takes great affront at and absolutely refuses to tell if asked to reveal what type of wish it grants, although the number of wishes granted is usually revealed. If a wish-granter is killed, the item loses its ability to grant wishes.

In wish stories, the many types of wishes and wishbringers overlap and form different situations. In "The Bronze Ring," the magical ring summons up 12 youths to serve the wearer. Though it never happens in the story, it is quite conceivable that if one of the servants is killed, the others would retain their power (and likewise with the dogs of "The Tinder Box"), though their magic might also possibly be diminished by the loss of a member. The snuff box in "The Golden Snuff Box" is able to ask and grant wishes, though it only speaks Spanish (which makes its use a bit difficult for an English-speaking character). And the magic matches in Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Match Girl" contain limited Wishes of Unspoken Desire, with the limitation being that each wish remains true only as long as the match burns (this might be solved by lighting the entire basket of matches at once with the flame of the last one).

On the subject of types of wishes, it should be stressed that no magic short of a wish itself will reveal what sort of wish a wish is. With certain types of wishes, such as Half-Wishes and Wishes of Vagueness or Contrariness, even this may not be possible. Trial and error is the best method; this explains why the traditional three wishes are best — one to make a mistake, one to undo it, and one to get something actually desired.

As for wish arbitration, the stance taken by all the games on the market is that, in the end, all wishes are subject to the GM's decision of what is and is not possible. Players may choose to be "wish lawyers" by writing out the text of wishes with exacting precision ("Being that the party of the first part, the wishee, wishes that . . ."), but with all the possible types of wishes, such contracts become meaningless in most situations. As a final rule, it should be stressed that one cannot wish for more than one thing unless it is a part of a complete conceptual package ("I wish I had a magic sword and a magic ring and a magic cape and a . . ." is not possible, although "I wish I had a complete alchemist's lab!" is, even though an alchemist's lab contains many items). Instead of ruling out clever or grandiose wishes that players are lucky enough to have due to the particular type

Table 5
Item Housing
the Wishbringer

Roll Wishbringer item

- 1 Golden snuff box*
- 2 Small charm or amulet
- 3 Child's wooden doll* *
- 4 Bottle or urn*
- 5 Necklace
- 6 Rainbow-colored plume
- 7 Teapot *
- 8 Wooden chest*
- 9 Small flute*
- 10 Tinder box*
- 11 Book of matches*
- 12 Cap
- 13 Dagger**
- 14 Locket*
- 15 Bone**
- 16 Small statuette**

* There is a 75% chance that this item is occupied, and that the inhabitant will appear when the item is opened or otherwise used.

** This item (50% chance) may be sentient in and of itself, and it is thus able to speak and grant wishes.

of wish they find, GMs should remember that there is absolutely nothing to keep the wizard next door from noticing. And knowing that wishes come in sets, any sensible, amoral magician will try to steal a wish-bringer ("New lamps for old! New lamps for old!").

Leprechauns' wishes traditionally have a unique limitation: If a fourth wish is made, all of the wishes are revoked and the leprechaun may then escape. The little men usually announce to their captors that they will grant four wishes to make sure that the fourth is made.

Certain magical items, instead of being limited to a prearranged number of wishes, might be limited to granting only one wish per person, or only one per year; thus, although the frequency of wishes is limited in this case, the number of wishes is unlimited. As in the case of Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Bottle Imp," the number of wishes may be unlimited, although the wishes granted are provided along with a horrible curse. In Stevenson's story, if a person died while owning the imp's bottle, his soul went to Hell. The only way to be rid of the bottle was to sell it to someone else for less than the seller paid for it.

As a final resort, there's always the make-a-last-wish-and-you-become-the-genii-of-the-lamp trick!

After all this, it should be clear that a wish is not a bed of roses, and it is quite possible that — after a few experiences with the different sorts of wishes — many parties might instead opt for the assault on the dragon's lair as holding a better chance of profit, or at least a better survivability rate.

Table 6
Type of Wish-granter in
Occupied Item

Roll Resident wish-granter

- 1 Singing, dancing tree frog or chicken
- 2 Ghost or spirit
- 3 Demon or devil
- 4 Talking cat or dog
- 5 Djinni or efreeti
- 6 Magic-user's or witch's soul
- 7 Fairy, goblin, or gnome
- 8 Will-o'-the-wisp (telepathic)
- 9 Ogre or giant (shrunk)
- 10 Three pigs (or other animals) who constantly argue
- 11 Imp
- 12 Miniature dragon

Note: Depending upon the game system, such wish-granters will obviously not be normal creatures of their type, but might share the usual statistics for such monsters in addition to being able to grant wishes (and perhaps perform other tasks).

Suggested reading

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Jacobs, William W. "The Monkey's Paw." Lang, Andrew. *The Blue Fairy Book*. New York: Dover, 1965.

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Nesbit, Edith. *Five Children and It*. New York: Penguin, 1959.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. "The Bottle Imp."

Ω



CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short, succinct, and under 150 words long.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. **No** call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the August issue is the last Monday of June. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to either Robin Jenkins or Roger E. Moore at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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GLATHRICON '89, June 9-11

The Evansville Gaming Guild proudly presents GLATHRICON '89, which will be held at the Executive Inn in Evansville, Ind. Guests of honor include Greg Costikyan and artist Robert Daniels. RPGA™ Network Coordinator Jean Rabe will also be our guest. This gaming convention's RPGA™ Network games will include: AD&D® Feature, Masters, and Grand Masters tournaments; MARVEL SUPER HEROES® Feature and Masters tournaments; CHILL*, PARANOIA*, RUNEQUEST*, and CHAMPIONS* game events; and more. A special event this year is the Joe Martin tournament to benefit the American Cancer Society. There will also be an art show and auction, and a masquerade. Registration is \$16; one-day memberships are \$6. Send an SASE to: Evansville Gaming Guild, P.O. Box 15414, Evansville IN 47716.

MOBI-CON '89, June 9-11

Mobile's convention for comic books and science-fiction and fantasy gaming will be held at the Days Inn Hotel at Airport Boulevard and I-65 in Mobile, Ala. Guest artists are Dave Dorman and Lurene Haines. Features include a dealers' room, movies, D&D® and TALISMAN* tournaments, and a games auction. Preregistration is \$12.50 until June 1; thereafter, it is \$15. One-day memberships are \$6 at the door. Write to: MOBI-CON, P.O. Box 161257, Mobile AL 36616; or call: (205) 661-4060.

ORGANIZED KAHN-FUSION 1, June 10

This gaming convention will be held at the Central Penn Business School in Summerdale, Pa., across the river from the state capital. Events will run from 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. Activities will include role-playing, board, war, and miniatures games. In addition, there will be a small dealers' room, along with videos and other events. Registration is \$4.99. Write to: Games Only, 200 Third Street, New Cumberland PA 17070; or call: (717) 774-6676.

SAN ANTONIO FANFAIR, June 10-11

About 600-800 people will be in attendance for this two-day gaming festival, which will be held at a hotel yet to be announced. Features will include 60 dealers' tables, 15 guests, a video room, Japanimation, programming, gaming, an open con suite, a masquerade, an art show, filksinging, and more. Admission prices are \$5 for Saturday, \$4 for Sunday, or \$6 for both days. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

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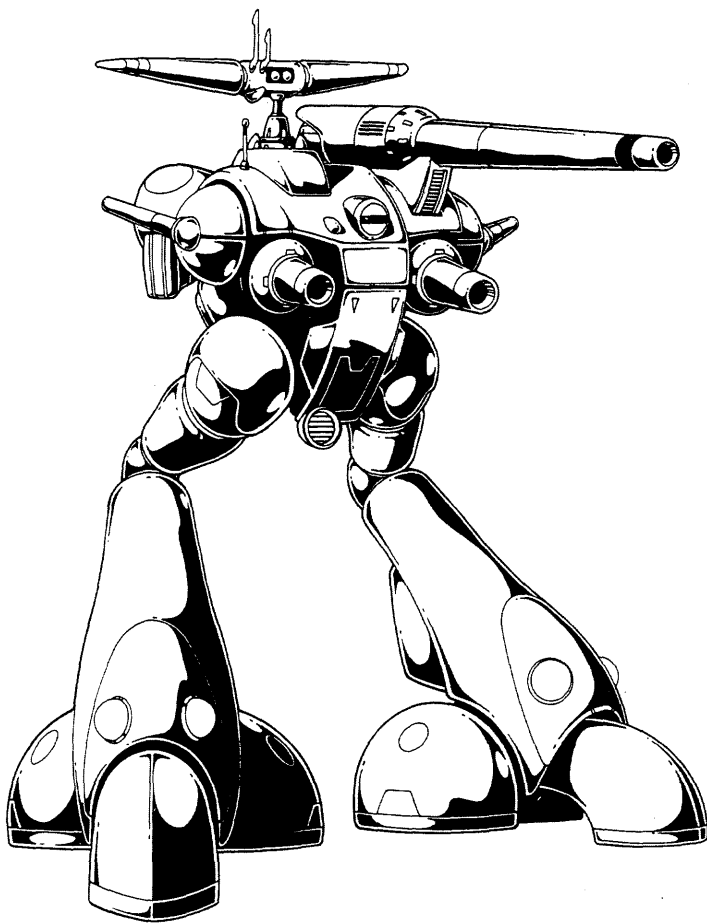
About 2,000 gamers are expected to attend this three-day gaming convention, to be held in the Southfield Civic Center in Southfield, Mich. There will be 60 board-game events, 60 miniatures events, and 25 role-playing events. In addition, there will be 35 dealers' booths, three used-games auctions, and a lot of open gaming. Advance admission is \$12 for all three days and \$7 for one day. Food and beverages will be sold at the convention. Preregistration information includes a list of all events, as well as a map of the convention site and several nearby motels and restaurants. The Southfield Civic Center is accessible via I-96, I-75, U.S. 10, and U.S. 29. Send an SASE to: Metro Detroit Gamers, P.O. Box 656, Wyandotte MI 48192. Call Barry Jensen during the day at: (313) 591-2300, ext. 325; in the evening, call Mike Bartnikowski at: (313) 928-7744; for dealer information, call Joe Tomasi at: (313) 382-1734.

MADISON GAME DAY, June 18

This one-day gaming event will take place at the Ramada Inn, 3841 East Washington Avenue, in Madison, Wis. Featured events will include: miniatures, role-playing, and board games; dealers, such as Pegasus Games, Wargame Room, and others; and other activities. Admission is \$3, with a \$1 charge per game played. Write to: Madison Gamers Association, c/o Nick Klapper, 1909 Heath Avenue, Madison WI 53704; or call him at: (608) 249-3264.

NEW ORLEANS SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY FESTIVAL '89, June 22-25

This year's convention will feature Anne Rice as guest of honor and J. K. Potter as artist guest of honor. Other guests will include: George R.R. Martin (producer, *Beauty and the Beast*), Melinda M. Snodgrass (story editor, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*), Denny O'Neil (senior editor, D.C. Comics), and many others. This convention will be held at the Bayou Plaza Hotel, 4040 Tulane Avenue, in New Orleans, La. (phone: (800) 421-4335). Events will include: 24-hour gaming, a costume contest, three-track programming, an art show and auction, a Saturday night dance, a 24-hour hospitality suite, a special charity event benefitting the Leukemia Foundation, a Friday night "Meet the Guests" party, movies and videos, and a large dealers' room. Registration is \$20 until June 1; prices at the door may be slightly higher. Write to: THE NEW ORLEANS SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY FESTIVAL, P.O. Box 791089, New Orleans LA 70179-1089; or call: (504) 767-1432 or (504) 835-4314.



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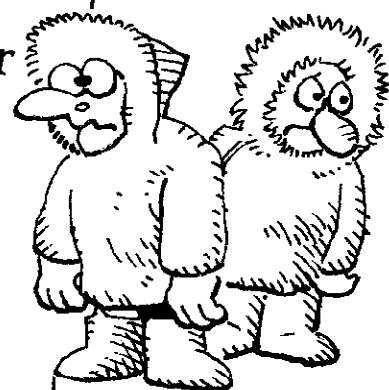
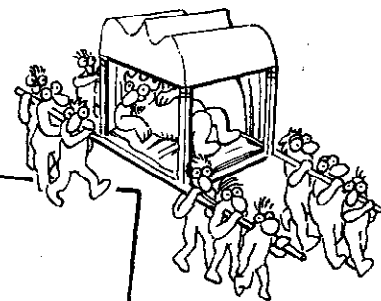
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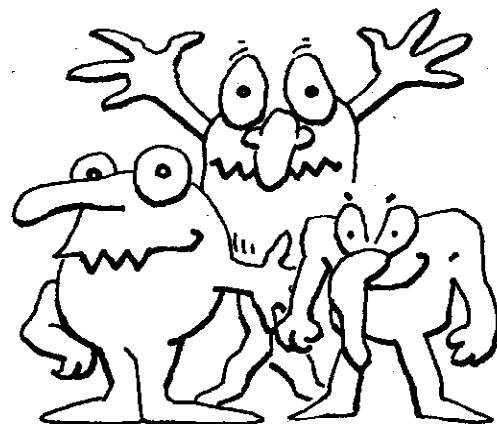
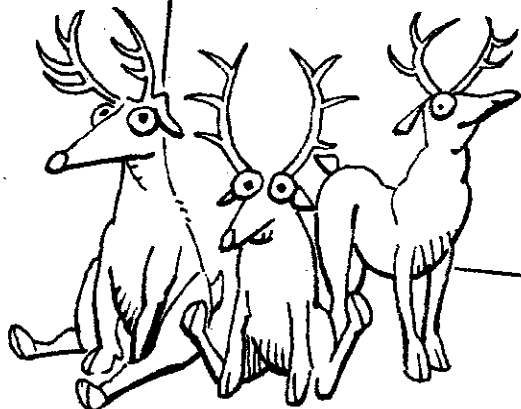
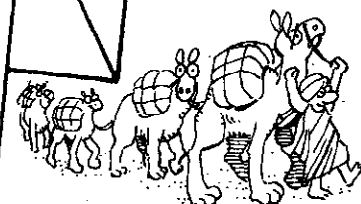


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DEMICON, June 23-25

The Harford Adventure Society presents its first gaming convention, which will be held at the Holiday Inn, located off I-95 and Route 22, in Aberdeen, Md. This convention will feature a large variety of games, including AD&D® games, war games, miniatures contests, and other role-playing games. Admission fees are \$20 at the door. Send an SASE to: DEMICON, c/o Harford Adventure Society, P.O. Box 1063, Aberdeen MD 21001. Make checks payable to the Harford Adventure Society.

COLLECTOR'S EXPO, June 24

This collector's show will be held at the Rome Georgia Civic Center on Turner-McCall Boulevard (across from the Village Theatre) in Rome, Ga. Show hours are from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. Events will include an AD&D® tournament; an ongoing DRAGONLANCE® board game; video showings of *Star Trek* bloopers, X-Men, and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles cartoons; an auction; and a special 50th-anniversary tribute to Batman. Admission to the show is \$1. There will be special workshops for comic-book collectors and baseball-card collectors. A miniatures-painting contest will be one of the show's highlights. Items available from the dealers will include comic books; baseball cards; games; miniatures; *Star Trek*, *Dr. Who*, and *Blakes 7* memorabilia; Japanese animation; and artwork. Dealers' tables are limited to 15 eight-foot tables at \$30 each. Write to: Amazing World of Fantasy, 2518-C Shorter Avenue, Rome GA 30161; or call Dana Pinkard (show chairperson) at: (404)235-2179; or Patrick Swinford at: (404) 234-5309.

L.A. ORIGINS '89, June 29-July 2

This gaming convention will feature all types of family, strategy and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming. L.A. ORIGINS '89 will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hilton Hotel. Bargains will be available at the flea markets, auctions, and exhibitors' area. Other events will include seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808; or call Diverse Talents at: (213) 420-3675.

FRON IV, July 1-2

This twice-yearly role-playing gaming convention will be held once again in Frankfurt, Germany, at the Buergerhaus Suedbahnhof. There will be many role-playing events in about 25 different game systems (including AD&D®, ROLEMASTER®, MIDGARD®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, and PARANOIA® games). Special events will include: a miniatures-painting contest for PCs, monsters, and dioramas; a costume contest with prizes for the best and most embarrassing fantasy and science-fiction costumes; a dealers' room; a PBM corner for long distance gamers (held on Sunday); a few real bards; and more. The convention will run from 10 A.M. to 10 P.M. on both days. Overnight housing is available at the nearby youth hostel. Admission is DM 2.50 per day, or DM 4 for the entire weekend. GMs and members of Rollen- und Simulationsspiel Verein "252" are admitted free of charge. If you wish to GM an event, or are looking for housing or registration information, write to: Role-Playing and Simulation Game Club "252" r.a., c/o Martin Kliehm, In der Roemerstadt 164, D-6000 Frankfurt 50, WEST GERMANY; in Germany, call: 69-574 579.

ARCANA CON VII, July 7-10

Melbourne's longest-running role-playing gaming convention will be staged at the Col-

lingwood Education Centre in Collingwood, Australia. Featured events will include a wide variety of tournaments, a masquerade, videos, a convention dinner, and a dealers' room. Write to: ARCANA CON VII, P.O. Box 312, Glenroy 3046, AUSTRALIA.

CASTLECON 2, July 7-9

This convention features science fiction, fantasy, and gaming. It will be held at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City at 2799 Jeff Davis Highway in Arlington, Va. Room rates are \$65 for a room with quad occupancy. Call (703) 418-1234 for reservations (mention CASTLECON 2 for room discounts). Featured events will include computers, space science and technology panels and discussions, video games, a masquerade party, writers' workshops, an art show, and a merchants' room. Preregistration for CASTLECON 2 is \$15 until June 1; thereafter, it is \$20. Send check, money order, or query letter to: FanTek, Box 128, Aberdeen MD 21001; or call: Bruce Evry at (703) 360-2292.

DOVERCON V, July 8-9

This year, DOVERCON will be held at the University of New Hampshire's Memorial Union Building (MUB) in Durham, N.H. Features include an RPGA™ Network AD&D® tournament, a film festival, and miniatures and art competitions. Registration at the door is \$15 for both days, or \$10 for one day. Each event costs \$2. Vendor and game-master inquiries are welcome. Write to: Information, DOVERCON V, P.O. Box 753, Dover NH 03820.

DALLASCON '89, July 14-16

The largest gaming convention in the Southwest is to be held at the LeBaron Hotel on Regal Row in Dallas, Texas. There will be over 100 events in role-playing, board, and miniatures gaming, including an AD&D® tournament and BATTLETECH® events. A dealers' room, movies, and an auction are among the activities planned. Write to: DALLASCON, P.O. Box 867623, Plano TX 75086.

DALLAS FANTASY FAIR, July 14-16

Held at the Sheraton Park Central, 12720 Merit Drive, I-635 at Coit Road, this gaming fantasy festival will offer 140 dealers' tables and more than 60 guests. Features will include two 24-hour video rooms, Japanimation, 24-hour gaming, four-track programming, a masquerade, an open con suite, an art show and auction, a charity auction, artists' and writers' workshops, autograph sessions, filksinging, dancing, an amateur-film festival, and a talent show. About 3,000 people are expected to attend. Admission for this event is \$20 for three days, if paid in advance, or \$25 at the door. Single-day admissions will be available at the door; prices are \$10 Friday, \$12 Saturday, and \$10 Sunday. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

MEMPHIS FANTASY CONVENTION VI July 14-16

This fantasy fiction and gaming event will be held at the OMNI Memphis Hotel, 939 Ridgeland Boulevard, in Memphis, Tenn. (phone: (901) 684-OMNI). Room rates are \$60 for a single or a double. Guests include: Larry Elmore, Keith Parkinson, Allan Hammock, George R. R. Martin, Michael Bishop, Tim Truman, and many other gaming, science-fiction, fantasy, and comics guests. Events include: 'round the clock gaming (over 50 role-playing and board games tournaments, including AD&D® game features, solo AD&D® game features, and BATTLETECH®

and STAR TREK® game events); a dealers' room; panels; films and videos; a banquet; a costume contest and party; an art show and auction; a writing contest; and more. Membership rates are \$15 for three days if paid before June 1; package deals purchased before this date include a three-day membership, a T-shirt, and a banquet ticket for \$40. At-the-door rates are \$22 for three-day memberships, \$18 for the banquet, and \$11 for the T-shirt. Write to: Ron Crum, Comics & Collectibles, 4750 Poplar, Memphis TN 38117; or call him at: (901) 683-7171.

WINDSOR GAMEFEST VII, July 14-16 *

This gaming convention will be held in Vanier Hall at the University of Windsor in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Guest of honor will be fantasy artist Kevin Davies. Activities will include fantasy, science-fiction, and miniatures games tournaments, along with many board-gaming events. Preregistration fees are \$8 Canadian for one day, or \$15 Canadian for the weekend. At-the-door fees are \$9 Canadian for one day, or \$17 Canadian for the weekend. Write to: Windsor Gaming Society, P.O. Box 7463, Sandwich Postal Station, Windsor, Ontario, CANADA, N9C 4G1.

ATLANTICON 89, July 20-23

This year's ATLANTICON will be held at the Baltimore Convention Center and the Baltimore Sheraton Inner Harbor. Attractions include four days of adventure gaming, discount coupons to each preregistrant for purchases in the dealers' area, game demonstrations, game auctions, and open-gaming areas. Conventioneers will be within walking distance of many other attractions, including Baltimore's Harbor Place, the National Aquarium, the Maryland Science Center, the United States Frigate *Constellation*, and the World War II submarine, the U.S.S. *Torsk*. Registration for the weekend is \$14 prepaid and \$18 at the door. One-day passes will also be available at the door. Write to: ATLANTICON 89, P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore MD 21220; or call: (301) 298-3135.

HAYSCON V, July 21-23

The Mid-America Gaming Society cordially invites all fantasy and science-fiction gamers to participate in the fifth-annual HAYSCON, which will take place at the Memorial Union of Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kans. Featured events include a miniatures contest, an auction, most major role-playing games, and an AD&D® game open tournament. Preregistration cost for three days is \$10. Write to: Mid-America Gaming Society, 1301 Felten Drive, Hays KS 67601; or call: (913) 625-8523 after 1 P.M. CST.

ERRADI-CON 1, July 22-23

This convention will be held at the Illinois Valley Banquet Center at 920 2nd Street in La Salle, Ill. Planned events include BATTLETECH®, TALISMAN®, and AD&D® games, along with a variety of miniatures events, a silent auction, and board gaming of all sorts. Prizes will be given away to winners of events, and a special drawing will be held as well. R&R Hobbies will be available to meet all your gaming needs. Preregistration fees for both days are \$6 in advance, or \$8 at the door. Send an SASE to: Paul Defenbaugh, 932 26th Street, Peru IL 61354; or call: (815) 224-4637 or (815) 223-3513.

MYTHCON XX, July 28-31 *

This year's MYTHCON will be held at the Gage lowers at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. The theme of this convention is "Mythic Elements in Fantasy." Our

writer guest of honor will be Guy Gavriel Kay; our scholar guest of honor will be Raymond Thompson (*The Return from Avalon* Special guests will include Michael G. Coney, Eileen Kernaghan, and others yet to be announced. Membership for this event is \$25 U.S., or \$30 Canadian. Payments may be mailed to: MYTHCON XX, P.O. Box 806, Station A, Nanaimo, B.C., CANADA, V9R 5N2. Information and enquiries regarding papers may be mailed to: Mason Harris, Department of English, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., CANADA, V5A 1S6. For writers' workshop information, write to: Neville Books, 5211 Neville Street, Burnaby, B.C., CANADA, V5J 2H7; or call (604) 435-6500.

ORLANDO SKIRMISHES '89, July 28-30

SKIRMISHES presents this role-playing and war-gaming convention at the Plaza Inn on Lee Road and Interstate 4 in Orlando, Fla. Room rates are \$35 for single occupancy and \$40 for double occupancy. Events include AD&D® game events, along with events in TRAVELLER*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, CAR WARS*, and SEA-KRIEG*. Other events include board gaming, a KILLER* tournament, dealers, a miniatures-painting contest, and more. Hotel reservations may be made by calling: (800) 342-0271. Registration is \$18 for the entire weekend. Send your registration fee to receive a program booklet. Write to: SKIRMISHES, P.O. Box 2097, Winter Haven FL 33883; or call: (813) 293-7983.

SUMMER CON OF 89, July 29

Sponsored by the Spellbound Wargamers Association, this gaming event will be held in Lebanon, Pa. The site is the Knights of Columbus Social Hall, located on the corner of Route 72 North and C & L Street. Activities will begin at 10 A.M., and will run until 10 P.M. Scheduled events include: CHAMPIONS*, SHOGUN*, AXIS & ALLIES*, BATTLETECH*, CAR WARS*, DELUXE ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, WOODEN SHIPS AND IRON MEN*, RECON*, and AD&D® games. A drawing will also be held for door prizes. Refreshments will be served throughout the day. Preregistration is requested, although tickets will be sold at the door. Costs are \$5 in advance, and \$7.50 at the door. Make all checks payable to Spellbound Hobbies. Write to: Scott Humm, 419 Canal Street, Lebanon PA 17042; or call Spellbound Hobbies at: (717) 273-0567.

PROJECT...GENESIS V, July 30

This protoriginal fantasy-gaming convention will be held at Chiminello's Hall, 2221 North Weber in Fresno, Calif. Featured tournament and open-play events will include BATTLETECH*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, STAR WARS*, TOON*, and AD&D® games, as well as many others. Other scheduled events include computer gaming, Japanese films, a miniatures contest, a swap meet, and more. Preregistration for this one-day event is \$3 if paid before July 13; after that, registration is \$5. Dealers' tables are \$20 for an eight-foot table; interested parties should call or write for more information. Swap-meet tables are \$5 for a whole table and \$3.50 for a half (table space is required for the swap meet). The convention needs judges for a number of events. Those accepted for positions receive a refund on their registration fees. Write to: PATCO, c/o Phillip S. Pittz, 5415 East Washington, Fresno CA 93727; or call (209)255-4682. Make checks payable to Phillip S. Pittz.

CAPITOL-CON V, August 5

This year's convention will be held at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield,

Ill. Featured events will include board, miniatures, and fantasy role-playing games. Write to: Bill Wilson, 99 Cottonwood Drive, Catham IL 62629; or call: (217) 483-5797.

HOUSTON FANFAIR, August 12-13

This fantasy festival, which will be held at a hotel to be announced, will draw from 600 to 800 attendees, and will offer 60 dealers' tables and 15 guests. Features will include a video room, Japanimation, programming, gaming, an open con suite, a masquerade, an art show, filksinging, and more. Admission is \$5 for Saturday, \$4 for Sunday, and \$6 for both days. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

COLLECTOR'S EXPO, August 18-20

This collector's show is held semiannually at the Eastgate Mall on Brainerd Road, just off Interstate 75, in Chattanooga, Tenn. Show hours are 10 A.M. to 9 P.M. on Friday and Saturday, and 12 A.M. to 6 P.M. on Sunday. Guests will include representatives from Marvel Comics. Events will include an AD&D® tournament (which begins Friday and ends with final rounds on Saturday); an ongoing DRAGONLANCE® board game; a TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES® event; workshops on comic-book and baseball-card collecting and gaming, a miniatures-painting contest; video showings of *Star Trek* bloopers, *X-Men* cartoons, and more; an auction hosted by our own Freddy Krueger (with proceeds going to the American Cancer Society); slide shows; and a Saturday-night costume contest. Admission to this show is *free*! The entire mall is the showroom area. It will include: comic books; baseball cards; *Star Trek*, *Dr. Who*, and *Blakes 7* memorabilia; Japanese animation; gaming; and other related items. Dealers' tables are 8' long; only 50 are available. Prices for these tables varies with the number of tables a dealer desires. Write to: Amazing World of Fantasy, 2518-C Shorter Avenue, Rome GA 30161; or call Dana Pinkard (show chairperson) at: (404) 235-2179; or Patrick Swinford at: (404) 234-5309.

GATEWAY '89, September 1-4

STRATEGICON will sponsor this convention at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. All types of family, strategic, and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will be offered, as well as flea markets, an exhibitors' room, auctions, seminars, demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808; or call Diverse Talents at: (213) 420-3675.

AMERICAN GAMES FAIR, September 8-10

Communications, Conferences & Exhibitions Ltd. presents this premier event, rescheduled from earlier this year. This show will be held September 8-10 at the Roosevelt Hotel (45th Street and Madison Avenue). This event is the first consumer and trade show for the games industry to be held in the New York area. A program of special events and entertainment will run throughout the duration of the fair. Highlights include: prize-winning RPGA™ Network AD&D® game tournaments and RPGA Network PARANOIA* tournaments; an open-gaming area; daily game demonstrations and presentations; seminars for game enthusiasts, manufacturers, retailers, and designers; an inspirational artists exhibit of original and poster art; and a "Best of Show" game competition. All categories of games are included within the scope of the show. Hours for this fair are as follows: Friday, trade only, 9:30 A.M. to 1 P.M.; Friday, trade and public, 1 P.M. to 10 P.M.; Satur-

day, trade and public, 9:30 A.M. to 10 P.M.; and Sunday, trade and public, 9:30 A.M. to 6 P.M. For more information, please write to: CCE Ltd., 122 East 42nd Street, Suite 1121, New York NY 10168; or call: (212) 867-5159, (212) 682-6232 (fax), or 425442 MEDIA (Telex).

AUSTIN FANFAIR, September 8-9

Over 60 dealers' tables, 15 guests, and over 700 convention-goers will be in attendance for this fantasy festival, which will be held at a hotel to be announced. Features will include a video room, Japanimation, programming, gaming, an open con suite, a masquerade, an art show, filksinging, and more. Admission will be \$5 for Saturday, \$4 for Sunday, or \$6 for both days, and will be available at the door only. Write to: Bulldog Productions, P.O. Box 820488, Dallas TX 75382; or call: (214) 349-3367.

MIRACLECON '89, September 9

This gaming convention will be held at the Shenango Valley Civic Center, on the corner of Pitt Street and Shenango Avenue in Sharon, Pa. Featured events will include an AD&D® tournament, an auction, a miniatures-painting contest, a dealers' room, and other role-playing and miniatures games events. Registration fees are \$5 at the door. There will be no separate event fees. Write to: Timothy A. Riley, 308 West Church Street, Urbana OH 43708; or: 7855 Elm Street SE, Masury OH 44438; or call him at: (513) 653-7848.

VALLEY CON 14, September 9-10

This science-fiction, fantasy, and comics convention will be held at the Days Inn Conference Center at 600 30th Street South in Moorhead, Minn. Guests will be announced at a later date. Featured activities will include video rooms, an art show and auction, a hucksters' room, numerous panels and demonstrations, a banquet, and a variety of gaming events, which will include STAR TREK: THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME*, RUNEQUEST*, ROLEMASTER*, SPACE-MASTER*, STAR WARS*, DR. WHO*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, and AD&D® game features. Send an SASE to: VALLEY CON 14, P.O. Box 7202, Fargo ND 58108; or call: (701) 232-1954.

SIOUX CITY WARGAMES IV

September 15-17

This gaming convention will be held at the Marina Inn in South Sioux City, Nebr. Featured events will include RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN*, DIPLOMACY*, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, SPEED CIRCUIT*, CAR WARS*, AXIS & ALLIES*, EMPIRE III*, JOHNNY REB*, HARPOON*, CHAINMAIL, World War II and Modern microarmor, and science-fiction games, among others. Special room rates will be available to conventioners. Admission to this event is *free*. Write to: SIOUX CITY WARGAMES IV, ATTN: Dave Patch, 1600 Pierce, Sioux City IA 51105.

CONTACT-7, September 29-October 1

This science-fiction, fantasy, and gaming convention will be held at the Ramada Inn, located on Hwy. 41 North in Evansville, Ind. Andrew J. Offutt will be the guest of honor; other guests will include George "Lan" Laskowski, Rick Dunning, and Arlan Andrews (toastmaster). Events include RPGA™ Network sanctioned gaming, closed-circuit television programming, an art show, a dealers' room, and a 24-hour hospitality suite. Membership is \$15 until September 1; \$20 thereafter. Write to: CONTACT-7, P.O. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737-3894; or call: (812) 853-5730.

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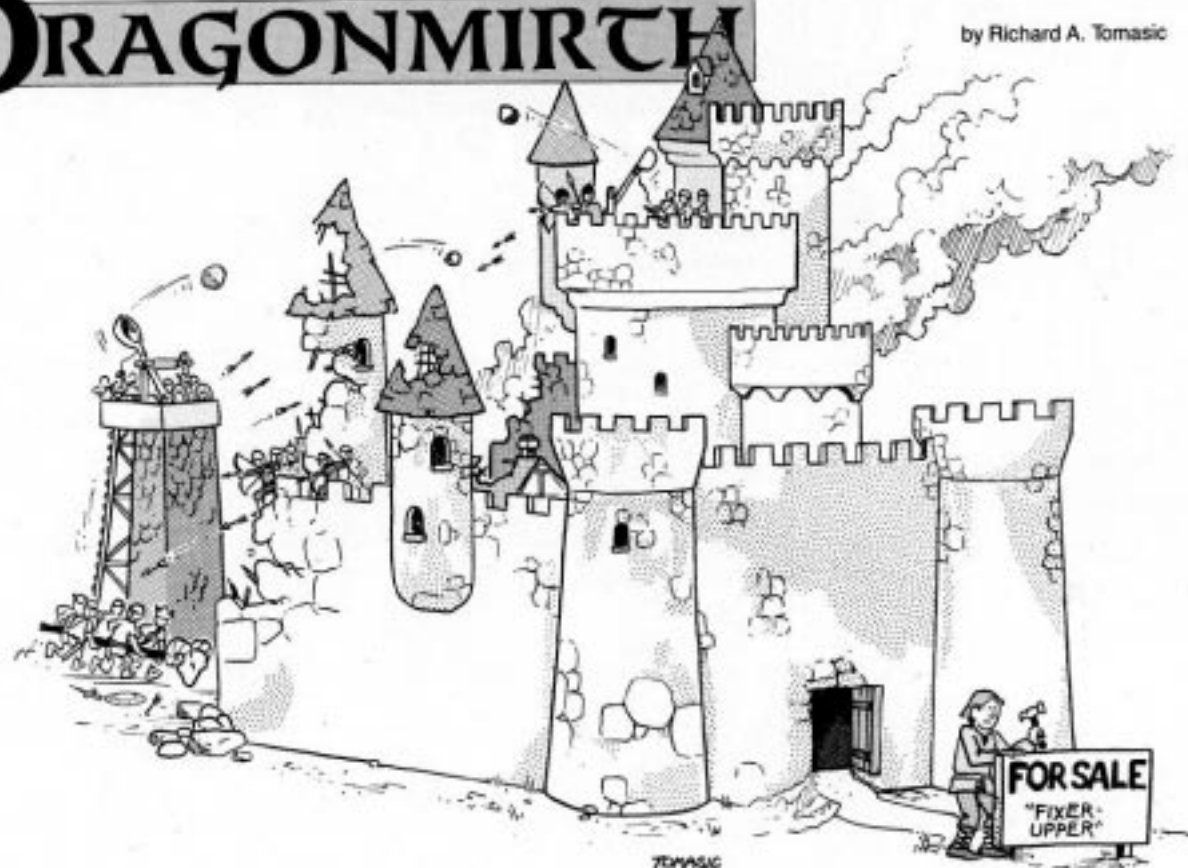
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FORUM

Continued from page 8

no bickering because most PCs realize that they need each other to complete their goals.

The moral of my story is simple: Even if PCs are bad, it doesn't mean that they can't be good.

Ian Reyes
Ware MA

"... with torches on the walls every 10'. At

the far end of the chamber is a flight of steps leading up to an altar. There are double doors, bound with brass, halfway down each wall"

I had stopped outside the classroom door, listening to the emotion-filled voice emanating from the semidarkened room. "I stop breathing, and try to concentrate on any sound from the balcony above," another voice said.

"You hear nothing but the wind whistling through the corridors, making the shadows cast by the torches flicker eerily."

I did not know what I was in for when I entered that classroom, but if someone had told me that once I found out, I would spend an average of three hours a day for the next three years playing a single game, I would have said he was crazy.

But I was caught by the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game.

People curse it. "It's the spawn of the devil" say some. "It's a waste of time and energy" say others. "It promotes sex, violence, and greed." Of course, these are the same people who have systematically railed against new inventions, social changes, and even entire fields of knowledge such as astronomy, medicine, and aeronautics since the beginning of history. Yes, the same people who told you that dancing would destroy the moral fabric of mankind, that playing cards would turn us all into rabid gamblers, and that using medicine to save the life of someone who is critically injured interfered with God's will, are now telling us that playing the D&D game will make us devil worshipers, murderers, suicidal, or worse. The D&D game is a pastime, nothing else. If you don't like the game, don't play it; but don't try to stop someone else from playing it. Didn't you learn anything from Prohibition?

People praise it. "It develops arithmetic, geometric, social, and linguistic skills." "It shows people that you have to pay for everything and plan for future needs—like an emergency at the end of the month. It helps players budget more effectively." "It helps players develop a more active imagination." Why are you making excuses? Would you react with anything but derisive laughter if someone said that playing chess will make you egomaniacal? Or that playing [Parker Brothers'] MONOPOLY® game will make you miserly? Or that playing Hangman will inure you to death and suffering? Responding to the people who make these accusations is like answering that age-old question, "Have you stopped beating your wife?" Any answer you give will simply be twisted by those who refuse to admit that they may have been mistaken. The D&D game is a pastime, nothing else. Don't try to defend it—just play it. Every one likes something, but not everyone likes the same things.

People love it. People hate it. To these people, I say, "Be more moderate. It is just a game. Save your emotions for people." It seems that most of the problems in the world come from people putting too much emphasis on things and ideas,

and not enough emphasis on the people around them.

People play it. To these people, I say, "Congratulations." You know what you want. I hope you find it.

Douglas J. Hutchinson
Ionia MI

I believe the ninja in the AD&D game realm does not represent the true aspects of the class. The character class should be revised to represent the true ninja.

To start with, the ninja developed from *mikkyo* (esoteric Buddhism). Ninja sought enlightenment by seclusion and spiritual development. These people were persecuted for their views and fled to remote areas where they showed strong individuality. Over time, several religions came together to form a deep and powerful belief that would form *nin-po* (ninjutsu in its highest order). During this time, ninja developed highly unorthodox skills that were required in order to survive the tremendous odds against them. They used these skills to protect mikkyo temples, sold knowledge of these methods to those who supported their lifestyles, and attacked those who persecuted them. The greatest use of these skills was when a general (who would become a shogun a few years later and start a reign of peace) was led by ninja through the mountains to Okazabi Castle.

This poses several problems. Are ninja chaotic because of their seclusion, or lawful because of their religion and beliefs?

And how can you say ninja must be non-good? They were persecuted for their beliefs, and all they did was defend them. If assassination poses a problem, just think about this: What do you call the good ranger who uses his infiltration skills to kill an enemy's commander?

Another thought: Ninja tend to represent monks. Both sought enlightenment by spiritual development. Shouldn't the ninja gain skills similar to those of the monk? After all, aren't the ninja simply monks in ninja form?

I believe ninja should be a single-class character like a thief or fighter, since being a ninja classifies one as a highly talented assassin. The disguise skill would represent the ninja's use of cover identities.

Tales about the ninja made them appear magical and mysterious. It was said that the sight of a ninja weaving *kuji-in* (energy-channeling hand positions) would weaken an opponent through the victim's subconscious fears. Shouldn't the ninja receive a *fear* power like the samurai? Even Japanese soldiers suffered from this fear of ninja.

I hope this letter will be taken into consideration by other DMs. Anyone interested in the ninja should read Kirtland C. Peterson's article "In Search of the Real Ninja" [magazine source not cited] and books written by Dr. Masaki Hatsumi or Stephen K. Hayes.

Kirk Karste
Glenwood MN

I feel that Mark Crane's letter (issue #138) warrants a few comments. I agree with his statement about ninja being misrepresented as evil cutthroat assassins. A ninja clan would, by its very nature, have tended toward true-neutral alignment (although individual ninja could be of varied alignments), as they were being paid for their talents by a selection of people from all segments of the alignment spectrum. (Their use of all forms of deceit and

many varied weapons and techniques is an indication of professionalism, not an evil alignment.) The clan leader (*jonin*) was not so much a warrior as a spiritual leader and philosopher. As such, he would see the ninja clan's role in society as one of a balance between the extremes—good/evil and law/chaos.

The ninja were not peasants forced into a life of deception and [assassination] to defend themselves against samurai. They were in fact part of a secret organization with many separate clans or schools (*ryu*). It is likely that samurai would attack a village for any number of possible reasons, unaware that it was a ninja stronghold. If Mr. Crane reads *The Ninja and Their Secret Fighting Arts*, by Stephen K. Hayes, then he will find that the ninja Togakure Ryu was believed to be founded by a samurai, Daisuke Togakure.

The samurai dislike of ninja was a case of social arrogance (as the samurai were the upper class in a very class-conscious society). This did not, however, prevent the samurai from learning many martial-arts skills and techniques from the ninja. The samurai were the ninja's natural enemies, but mainly because the ninja were like a double-edged sword, working for a samurai one day and for his foe the next—a dishonorable sword, from a samurai's viewpoint. As the samurai both used and abused the ninja, ninja were forced to improve their skills, becoming more and more unorthodox.

Ninja activity began to fade when Japan became stabilized during the lengthy Tokugawa Shogunate, but it continued to operate in the role of a governmental law-enforcement and intelligence service.

One final point: Calling most samurai "scum" by today's standards is using the same short-sightedness that Mr. Crane accuses other people of, with regard to ninja. The comment is hardly warranted in a century that produced Hitler, the atom bomb, and countless acts of terrorist aggression. The samurai and the ninja came from the same society. Such being the case, the label applied to the samurai would also apply to the ninja. Many people's view of Japanese samurai stems from the Japanese treatment of Allied prisoners during the Second World War. Let us recall that, right or wrong, this was a society that produced kamikaze pilots because the samurai had no concept of surrender or capture; anyone coming into that category forfeited all honor and was open to any indignity. This was also a society with a totally different outlook on life and death. Failure was unimportant as it didn't signify a loss of honor (there being the concept of the "nobility of failure"); honor could always be regained by ritual suicide.

Martin Millar
Derbyshire, England

Q

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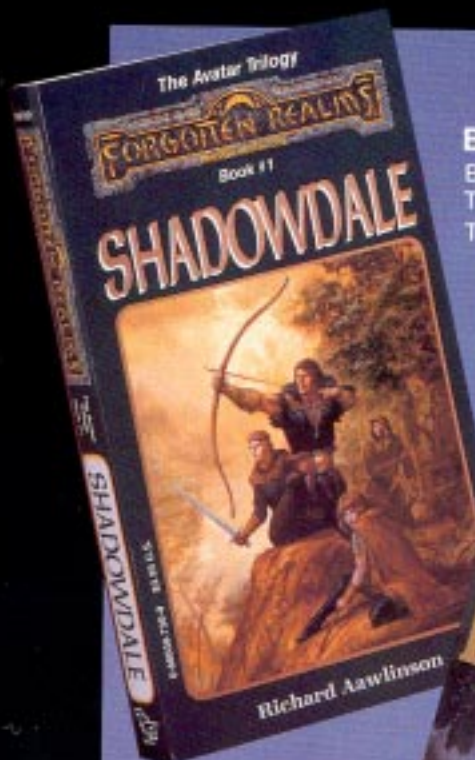
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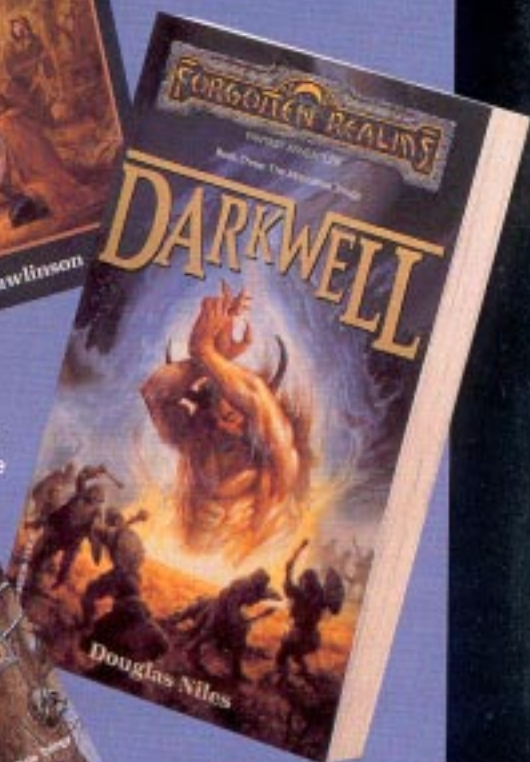
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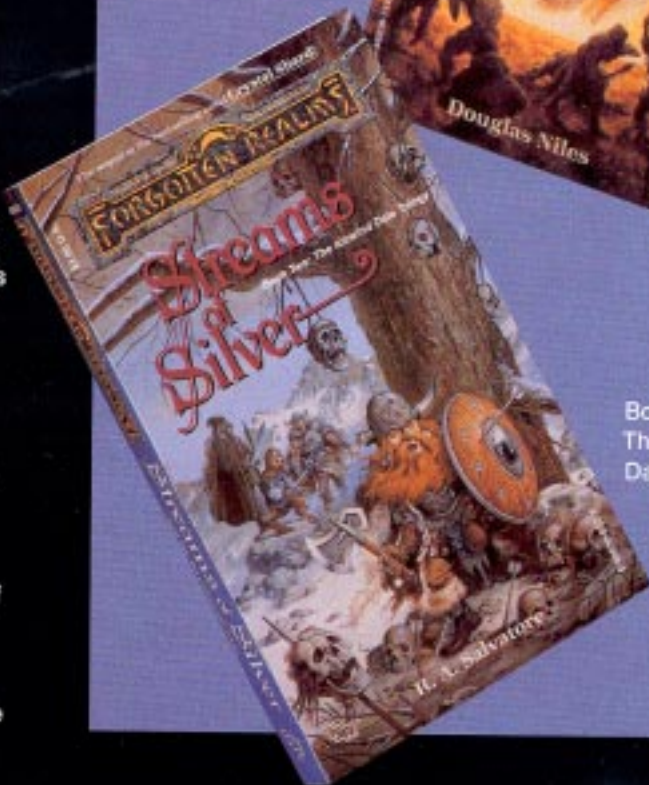


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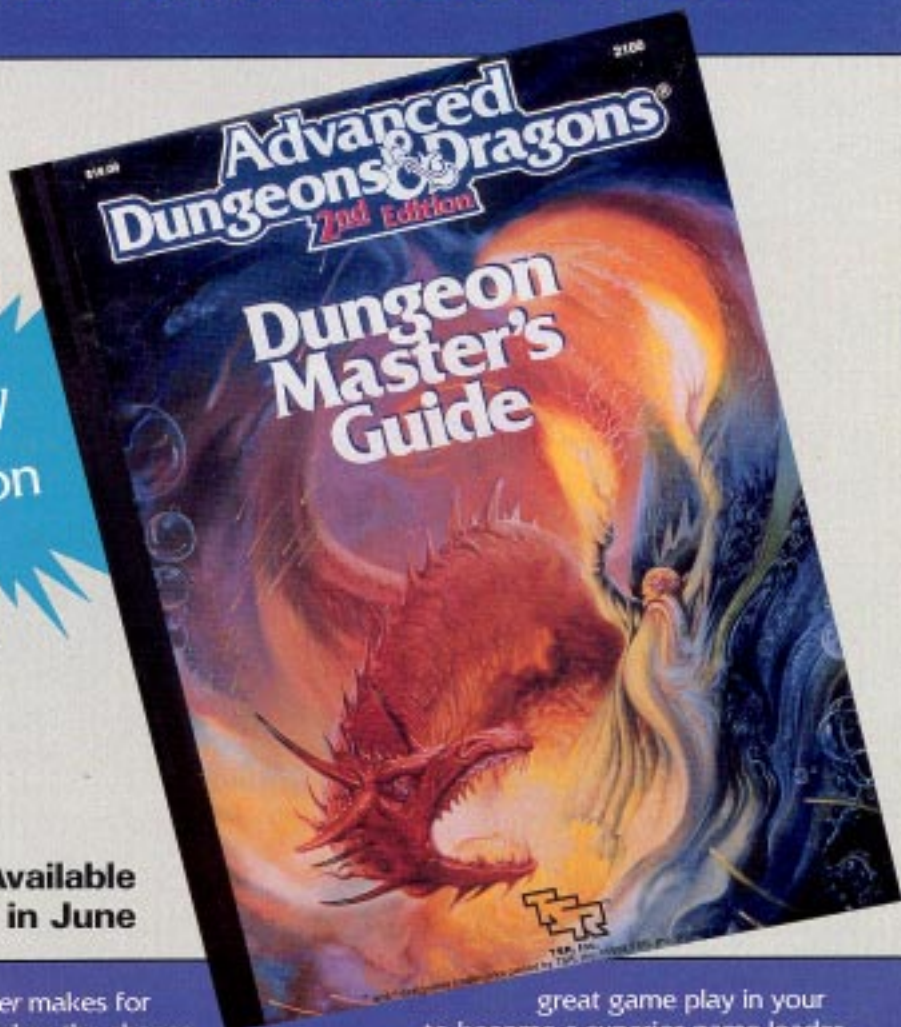


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